


At
the Sign
of the
Silver Cup



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

Betty N. LeFevre -

Jan. 5th 1927 -

AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

By
HELEN ATTERIDGE



P. J. Kenedy & Sons
NEW YORK

COPYRIGHT, 1926,
By P. J. KENEDY & SONS
Printed in the United States of America

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I LUKE SEEKS LIFE	3
II THE SILVERSMITH'S ON THE BRIDGE	25
III SIMON RODGE	39
IV LUKE FINDS "MR. WHITE"	46
V IN REUBEN BUCKLE'S SERVICE	62
VI FARYNOR'S BAKERY	74
VII THE GREAT FIRE	89
VIII "WHEN MEN SHALL REVILE YE"	106
IX LUKE ACQUIRES IMPORTANCE	120
X LUKE CHANGES HIS LODGING	139
XI LONG AFTER	158
XII A GLIMPSE OF CHERRY PIE ALLEY	170
XIII THE MAN WITH A DRAWL	174
XIV THE WARRANT	188
XV THE MYSTERY AT PRIMROSE HILL	199
XVI THE TRIAL	207
XVII THE REAL RICHARD LANGHORNE	225
XVIII "AS IF I COULD EVER FORGET YOU!"	233
XIX THE VALIANT PETITIONER	243
XX THE FOURTEENTH OF JULY	253

NOTE

The fortunes of the 'prentice from the Silver Cup lead us at times over foundations of fact. In this story for the first time is reproduced the trial of the Venerable Richard Langhorne, taken from the State Papers preserved in the British Museum Library. Part of the trial set down verbatim is a fencing match between the heroic Catholic lawyer and Titus Oates.

In the same Library there is a very small 8vo book, printed in 1683—"a Remonstrance of Piety and Innocence," bearing the name of Abbot Corker the Benedictine, a collection of the last words and prayers of the martyrs whose contemporary and fellow prisoner he was. The verses quoted from the impromptu poem of the Ven. Richard Langhorne, are only a few lines from many pages.

The words attributed to the Venerable Father Whitebread in the story are nearly all taken from his prayers and meditations printed in the same book of prison writings.

It may be of interest to readers to explain that in the chapters concerning Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey the details of his last days and apparent preparation for death are all historical; and an elaborate study of the inquest and the erroneous verdict may be found in the book of the historian Alfred Marks—"Who Killed Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey?" His investiga-

tion was made from the super-abundant records, with the help of the British Government's modern surgical expert, Dr. Freyberger.

Mr. Bell, in his monograph of the Great Fire of London, has given, from recent research, the most detailed descriptions of the burning of the picturesque old wooden city, and the wholesale arrest of "Papists" that followed.

AT THE SIGN OF THE
SILVER CUP

AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

CHAPTER I.

LUKE SEEKS LIFE

LUKE FURROW had always longed for Life—
more Life.

That was why he was tramping to London, with his bundle on his shoulder. It was moonlight; and this was Old London, with timber-built houses and signboards, upper storeys overhanging the cobblestoned way, broad diamond-paned lattices higher and higher glistening to the moon.

He had memories. First—the old Sussex farmhouse, his mother and grandfather at the door—the one, the most tenderly loved on earth, waving a kerchief, and the other cheerily signalling farewell with the blackthorn stick. Then—the last look from the corner at the sagging tiled roof, and the trees that overhung the road: the gay goodbye to John and Michael, when he climbed into the cart at the inn. He felt a slight sympathy for his brothers stuck vegetating at Burford, when he set off to live with Uncle Giles in London. He was just a little sorry for John and

4 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

Michael standing on the road, as the Golden Lion faded into the dust behind the cart.

Memories!—The old home again . . . a long time ago . . . that night when he was a very small boy, for it was his fifth or sixth birthday, and he and his brothers were up late roasting nuts in the hot ashes at the edge of the kitchen hearth—and all at once there was a noise of horses galloping up the yard, and they were packed off to their beds, birthday or no birthday. He remembered how the mother told John to be sure not to forget their night prayers, and she pressed lumps of plum-cake into their hands, and shut the door to the staircase behind the three. A stranger came that night—the most hungry and dusty and weather-beaten stranger he had ever seen. At an unearthly hour of the night, Luke remembered yielding to curiosity and the smell of roast goose and griddle-cake. He remembered slipping out of bed, and getting into John's big coat, the sleeves hanging over his hands and the skirts trailing after him. He found his way to the good smell, which concentrated at the end of the long passage they called the lobby. And there, in the spare room was the hungry man seated at supper, holding what Grandad called "a drumstick" in one hand and the silver goblet in the other—the one silver goblet they had in the house. There was firelight; that was the only bedroom that had a hearth and a chimney. The wooden shutters were closed. Luke saw him through a chink of the curtains round the four-post bedstead. The hungry man's voice called:—"Go away down, Hawton! There's no need to stand by the door. Stuff yourself, man, while

you've got the chance. And see the horses have a feed and a rub down." All at once he listened, looking a bit scared, sprang up and was round the bedstead in two strides to see who it was. And then Luke said:—"Please sir—I don't think I'm the man you want, sir." And at that the stranger laughed out with a great guffaw, and said, "Oddsfish! What a sight!" At that, of course, Luke must have grinned and looked down at his flapping sleeves and bare toes, and then up at the stranger. Anyhow they made friends, and he went round to the fireside, where the poor gentleman's long riding boots were drying and steaming; and he had a lump of griddle-cake smeared with honey—and some conversation.

"Where's your father, lad?"

"He was killed, sir, fighting for the—" There he stopped, and hoped this man with the terrible thick black eyebrows would not guess what he was near saying. For that poor King, that his father fought for, had been beheaded in London, and no one was to mention him, except when they sat round the kitchen fire. All the same, they had the portrait of Charles with the long curls and the deep lace collar; it was in the oak chest—till better days.

"So they killed your father, lad!" the stranger said, and put a kind, big, greasy hand on little Luke's head. "They killed mine too."

Luke remembered looking down the staircase before he crept back to his bed. The door into the kitchen was open, and there was firelight, men's feet stretched out, and a masculine duet of snoring. In the morning they were all gone. His mother kissed

6 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

his forehead, and told him "Not now—some day!"—when he began to ask questions. But the grandfather showed him the blackthorn, and ordered him not even to breathe a word to his brothers. The mother promised he would keep the secret, and put protecting arms round him. Grandad was a great deal fonder of King Solomon than he need have been, and all three boys wished the blackthorn stick had not been mentioned in the Bible.

Another memory of Luke's—a mysterious visitor, but quite different! On a winter morning, so early that it seemed to be dead of night, the boys were roused. Downstairs the country folks were streaming in. The light of the door was covered with a curtain, and the windows were shuttered. A man dressed like a labourer came, with a straw bag in his hand; and they all knelt, and he made the sign of the Cross over them. There was a sort of altar in the one large downstairs room of the farmhouse—the room that was entrance hall and dining room and kitchen combined. There was a priest in vestments, and two lighted candles, and a kneeling crowd punctuating the Mass with murmurs and sighs, prayer-words half aloud. The holy Chalice and the white Host were lifted in the old familiar room; and Luke felt a sudden awe as if Heaven had come near, and he sat back on his heels, and hid his face against his mother's gown. That morning he could never forget—never, if he were to live a hundred years! And it was farther back in memory than the coming of the hungry stranger in the night.

Yet other pictures in the mind of Luke Furrow were memories of Amos Arbor, the schoolmaster, and the

noisy school in the wayside shed. The schoolmaster at one time had dreams of Douay for Luke. There was a rare intelligence about the boy, spiritual instincts that were not to be found among the young country bumpkins and untamed bear-cubs of the school. So Luke had Latin lessons at home on the winter evenings, and he entered eagerly into the Douay dream. The spiritual perception had something to do with it, and that expectation that he could not put into words, the consciousness of some other state of destiny, that, made boyhood at Bush Farm seem as if he were not yet alive. Of course, the love of adventure was subtly entangled with the desired vocation. Anyhow, fuller light revealed the mistake. But Luke had learned far more than the beginnings of Latin. He had heard many a heroic history, and he had never for one moment been held back by the supreme peril that was faced and welcomed by every priest that came in those days from Douay or any seminary. "Jesuits and seminary priests";—it was all on the statute book since Elizabeth's time.

He remembered Mr. Amos Arbor coming in one day, with a sort of brave dejection on him, a gallant way of facing ruin. "They have slung me out," he said, "and the sooner I go the safer. It was the Rodges sent the talk round. Simon Rodge hates me. They say I am a Jesuit in disguise." He slightly laughed. "I said I had not that honour, but I wouldn't deny being what they called a Papist. That angered them almost as much. Burford is no place for me. They have shut the school, and nailed up the door."

As Luke grew up Amos Arbor's teaching remained;

8 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

but the idea of Douay had been founded on natural instincts and spiritual emotions as beautiful and as transient as the colours of the dawn.

When Luke was fifteen, a day had come that set the bells of the parish church chiming hour after hour with relays of ringers, and spread a feast on the Manor House lawn, and made the hills glow with bonfires through the night. The Restoration! The banished Stuarts had Throne and Crown again.

Long before that, his mother's lips had whispered the secret to Luke. The spare room had always been kept in perfect order, just as it was on that eventful night. Never would it be forgotten at Bush Farm, that the King had slept there when he was in flight to the coast after the defeat at Worcester.

The Merry Monarch was keeping Court at Whitehall now. He had his favourites to think of, his great ladies and his courtiers; and he was very busy amusing himself. That most engrossing occupation left but little time for public affairs. Possibly he had not forgotten that there was a Worcester Field once, and a rough time after it. But as to whether he remembered all the friends that had sheltered him—that was quite another matter. For between the hunting and the feasting, the duchesses and the lap-dogs, one lived a frivolous life in the most strenuous manner at Whitehall. Charles the Second was like a beggar come to riches; he had forgotten everything else in the luxury of the present. Meanwhile only the faintest rumours of the life at Whitehall Palace had reached the farmhouse at Burford. If the Golden Lion gossiped scandals, no tales went down to Bush Farm.

London Bridge was of far more importance to Luke than Whitehall Palace. For last year—that was the year of grace, 1665—his grand-uncle, Giles Furrow, had ridden down into Sussex to ask for one of the three brothers as an apprentice. The Bush Farm folk wouldn't hear of it then. Grandfather Furrow had put down his pewter pot of home-brewed ale, grumbling about the plague, and shaking his long white hair.

"The plague is gone," Giles said. "The frost killed the sickness."

"Doan't you believe nowt o' that. There was never a frost could kill weeds." Grandad Furrow was always a bit pessimistic. Giles the silversmith from London Bridge, stuck to his own opinion, and they argued—hammer and tongs; while Luke, with the corner of his eye upon his London relative, made his own ideas clear enough with beseeching glances.

All the same, "Uncle Giles," as they called him for short, made admissions when they talked round the fire in the evening. The sickness *had* been bad, though he was sure it was killed now by the frost and snow. His descriptions were blood-curdling. He told of the red cross smeared on the doors of houses to be avoided: the flight of hundreds of families: the horrid noise of the cart going past on summer nights, the man ringing his handbell, and calling in a sort of hoarse whisper—"Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead!"

"On the other hand," said the stooping and grey-bearded Uncle Giles, "the most learned apothecaries are of my opinion as to the sickness being all over now with this winter. My trade is one of the best.

10 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

One of my nephews may do better than I ever did and make a fortune. I may yet. It's the fines that take the marrow out of one's bones. Still we get on mighty comfortably at the Silver Cup." Beyond that word "we get on" he was very reserved.

It was only now in the spring of the next year that the family at Bush Farm decided that it was safe for Luke to go. Two days in the cart brought him safe to Kingston, where they broke an axle, and he tramped the rest of the way.

On the last Sunday morning he had seen Squire Pennifer, when the Furrows drove over in the cart to the Manor House, where there was always Mass. Luke always had the reins of the Sunday cart, and the plank seats were crowded with the family, the two labourers, and Sal and Betty, the dairy wenches. John and Michael rode farm horses. Luke always put the horses safe into the stable yard of the great house by lantern light. That last morning, as he made his way among a straggling crowd through the dark shrubberies, his heart was beating fast with the thought of London. None of those quiet folks knew he was stepping out into the great world.

A word from his grandfather was overheard as they went into the house, "My grandson is going to-morrow—any parcel or letter. An honour to do any service!"

Luke raised his eyes. Squire Pennifer was talking to his grandfather. The group diverted the course of the straggling congregation coming into the square lamp-lit hall.

"Going to be a silversmith—eh? Then I hope he

will be apprenticed to Mr. Miles Prance. Mr. Prance is a Catholic. I have just given him an order for some chafing dishes."

"He is going to my brother, sir—my brother that has done much better than our family out here. Giles Furrow, on London Bridge. Thank God, sir, we have all kept the old Faith!"

"Ah! that's all right!" said the Squire. "He will find things quite easy up there in London now. Mass at the Ambassadors' houses you know; and they have it in other places too. Plenty of priests. They have the Benedictines there in the Savoy—and the Capuchins over near St. James's Palace. Oh! he will be all right. The bad times are done. We are going on now from freedom to freedom." There was a triumphant ring in the Squire's voice. "Still it's well for a young man to be with our own. It's jarring to hear one's religion talked against by the ignorant. And now—what was that you said about doing me a service? Yes—I want to send a letter, and I'd rather make sure and send it by hand." He looked at Luke Furrow, and it was a well set-up youth he saw, and an honest face aglow with pleasure. He thought there was a fine mixture of frank unworldliness and brave intelligence in that alert countenance under the thick shock of brown hair. "I want," the Squire went on, "to send a letter to my timber merchant, Mr. Godfrey. I have written twice, and had no answer; I don't know whether my letters miscarry, or whether he is a bit out of sorts." Glancing at the grandfather, he explained: "Godfrey is a busy man—a Justice of the Peace. There's timber to be cut down, and I would

like to have his advice. I want him to come and stay with me. There's no use for any of us in living alone, and looking at the black side of things. The air we have at Burford would do anybody good, wouldn't it? Ay, ay—fine air. And he has been in London all the time of the plague—a right good man Mr. Godfrey!—So I shall want your son to go and see him, in Harts-horn Lane, and put my letter in his hand. And I'll send over the letter to the farm some time to-day." A last word to Luke: "I suppose you are not sorry to go to London?"

Luke fairly grinned with delight. "I'm mighty glad, sir."

"Ah! well—that's as it should be when you begin work. What's that in the play: 'A merry heart goes all the day—your sad tires in a mile-a'?—Good luck, lad! And now we must not keep the priest waiting!" He went off towards the staircase with a wave of his hand.

Luke followed in the crowd. From the upper floor, they went up narrower stairs to a large attic in the roof. Canvas was nailed across the skylights. From long habit, all precautions were still taken as in perilous days. On a Sunday morning before dawn the worshippers assembled, coming in, as they used in dangerous times, by the side lane; and no skyward ray from the roof of the Manor House was to show that the forbidden Mass was still being offered by the faithful few, whose conscience kept them out of the parish church. In the attic consecrated by long use as a secret chapel, the groups from miles around knelt at benches and chairs, or sat waiting, the men with uncovered

heads, the women hooded or veiled with country shawls. A few field-workers, sunburnt girls, had coarse straw hats bent and tied under the chin. The Squire's wife and little daughter wore black lace mantillas, that perhaps had come from Spain.

There was a faint scent of wax from the candles, and the close warm atmosphere of a place habitually shut up; but there was also the smell of thyme and laurel from the floor strewn with little sprays of greenery; and great bowls of summer roses breathed perfume not from the holy altar, but from a humble station at each side of it on the floor.

The temporary altar had been contrived of a great carved dower-chest firmly mounted on two broad oak stools; and this was covered with pure white linen. Across the wall behind it was stretched a curtain stiff with gold embroidery. Candlesticks of silver richly wrought upheld the altar candles. The vestments of the priest were the hidden treasures of some former generation—cloth of gold a little tarnished by time, sparkling here and there in the candlelight with real jewels. The master of the house had kept for himself the honour of serving Mass.

Nearly a century before, the Divine Sacrifice had been forbidden by law. As far as human power could go, every effort had been made to stamp it out. Since the twenty-seventh year of Queen Elizabeth, the law was on the statute book, that it was death for a priest to come into England and death for anyone to harbour a priest. By order of Grindal, the State-appointed bishop of London, the altar stones of the old churches had been taken away and put to the vilest uses—

14 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

trodden upon in the porch pavement of the parish church, or built into the farmer's pigsties. All the same, the Mass was going on. It had not been stamped out. And people knew "it was the Mass that mattered." Those who had the privilege of sheltering the Sacred Mysteries, did their best to make reparation by prodigal gifts. Wherever the Host and the Chalice were lifted, all that was most beautiful and most precious belonged to the altar. The chalice itself, that had to be hidden, might be but the smallest thing, a mere film of silver unscrewing into three pieces to be carried on the person of the priest; but the vestments and accessories of worship, that awaited his coming, represented in the great houses the labour of years. Chasubles were made by hands that could not give enough. One set of vestments dating from the penal times is still preserved, enriched with four hundred pearls.

One can imagine from such touching efforts to make amends, the hidden splendour and the humble reverence that surrounded the altar at such a Mass as that heard by the Furrow family, in the upper room at the Manor House. There knelt Luke, thinking of to-morrow, trying to turn excitement into prayer, and failing—distractions buzzing about him like flies. There next him knelt the mother, praying as only a mother can pray, not setting fortune first, but imploring that her boy might remain unchanged in heart and soul. The town was to her simplicity a place where there was money almost for the picking up; but she would rather that Luke never made his fortune than that he picked up money and soiled his soul. Her

boy would be safe with Giles Furrow, and the Lord would take care of His own.

Later in the day the Squire's messenger came on horseback with the letter that was to be carried to "Mr. Godfrey, Hartshorn Lane, Strand, London." Luke's heart had jumped for joy at every proof that he was really going. Of course it was a wrench, but beyond the wrench was the wide world. He wanted Life.

If he had never known it before, he knew from his mother's lips that last evening why the Furrows were poor. The three boys had worked with the labourers at the land; even his grandfather was often out in a smock-frock at dawn. One saw every bone in his mother's slender hands, and lately she was strangely old and work-worn. Ah well—he was going to make a fortune for them all.

They had lost property, the best in the county, unable to pay the fines. They had lost rank; the Furrows were only working farmers now. They had lost education, having no school but the shed by the hedge. But they had *not* lost the Faith of their fathers.

All this was in the mind of Luke as he tramped alone into London, on that moonlight night. Old London was a city picturesque as stage scenery—a labyrinth of narrow lanes, with timbered houses and diamond-paned lattices—a place of chiming clocks and countless spires. It had lasted, timber built, for centuries, and soon like a pageant scene it was to vanish.

Already it had far outrun the old walls and gates—Ludgate and Newgate, Aldersgate, Old Gate or Aldgate. Somewhere in the labyrinth of alleys were Pater-noster Row, Ave Maria Lane and Amen Corner. And

16 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

Pudding Lane, down by Thames Street, had not yet become famous.

It was past twelve o'clock by the chimes, when, after much wandering, Luke found a watchman with lantern and staff to direct him to the Bridge. As he passed the church of St. Magnus, its belated bells struck two quarters. A towered gateway of three arches was straight in front of him, the middle arch closed at the top with squares of portcullis bars. He went down the steep stony pavement of Fish Street Hill, not knowing yet the name of any street in this city of strangers. The central arch of the towered gate was open, lighted by a horn lantern. He heard his feet echoing as he tramped through; and here he was at last on London Bridge. From that point it looked very much like a street. One could hear the water booming against the piers and surging underneath. The moon had come out again, and the windows at one side were bright, while the houses at the other side were in darkness. The gabled lines of roofs showed against the sky, and the signboards were gently creaking in the wind from the river.

Among the bright houses on the left, he soon saw the sign of a gilded hammer, and next to it hung out in a square iron frame the flat semblance of a Silver Cup.

Luke knocked at the low-built door with his knuckles; then thumped with his whole fist; then banged, till the opposite houses echoed. He *would* get in. Surely Uncle Giles heard *that*!

An upper lattice window flew open at the Golden Hammer.

"Any place on fire?" A leering face, looked down—a coarse wide-mouthed face that was all deep lines in the moonlight. "What are you making that devilish row for? Why—Furrow! You?—Haw! haw!" Then he asked, with plentiful mention of diabolical powers and matters infernal, what did Luke Furrow want at this hour of the night.

The freaks of Fate—the horrible tricks of Chance! If this was the Silver Cup, he was to be lodged in London at the very next house to Simon Rodge, the Burford bully, that went some months ago to London. They say in these days it is always the unexpected that happens, and the unexpected played the same freaks long ago.

Luke felt rather abashed. "I didn't know you were living on the Bridge, Rodge. I'm knocking to wake my Uncle—Mr. Giles Furrow. This is the Silver Cup, isn't it?"

The other laughed aloud. "You're at the Silver Cup right enough. Want to wake old Giles Furrow, do you?—Better go to the plague pit; I'll find out which pit they took him to." He laughed "Haw! haw!" at his own brutal joke. "Old Furrow gave the last kick a long time ago," he said. "May or June. Same time as them three cases of plague in Fenchurch Street. They shut up the shop here."

All the horror of it swept over Luke—the red chalk that was once on this door, and the death-cart coming here at night:—"Bring out your dead!" They brought out poor Giles Furrow—Uncle Giles who was so sure the plague was gone—Uncle Giles that he had come here to find and to serve. Luke instinctively

18 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

made the sign of the Cross; they always made it at home when the sickness was talked of, and they said the prayer that used to be chalked with the Cross on the London doors—"The Lord have mercy on us!"

"What's that *heus poeus*?" Rodge had seen the hand move. "Yull have to drop all that now yer here in town. Better cut an' run away home. If you catch the plague, you won't be saved by crossing yer-self."

"There is a long time ago." Luke saw Rodge wanted to get rid of him; he made up his mind not to be discouraged. "Who is here now?"

"The plague is there—if you want to know. And there's that old fool of a fellow, Buckle—the crustiest old skin-flint—" Simon Rodge stopped abruptly and disappeared from the window, as if he fell back into darkness; for the upper lattice of the Silver Cup had swung open noiselessly, and Mr. Reuben Buckle was leaning out close by.

The listener was clad in a tattered black gown and a skull-cap—a thin man with hollow eyes and a pointed tuft of grey beard. A word of expostation from Luke, and he drew his head in again after grumbling at "that hound next door." A light appeared. There were noises, footsteps. Then bolts were drawn back, and a key turned. The door opened, and Luke fell into the silversmith's shop, not knowing of the steep step down from the road.

There was need of a 'prentice. Mr. Reuben Buckle had been badly in want of one. The Quinter—the grandnephew of Giles Farrow, was best. Well, then he should come in, even at this hour of the night. In

dentures could be signed to-morrow. "But I work, and I never waste money. Anybody that comes here must work. Can you do rough jobs? Can you scour the floors and save better hands than yours?"

"I'll do anything. I don't care what I do, if you'll have me," said Luke.

"Who are you speaking to?"

"Sir—sir—oh! I mean 'sir'!"

"That's better. Then don't keep me up any longer. I never knew such an unearthly hour to come applying for a situation."

Mr. Reuben Buckle was a trifle impatient at being roused out of his sleep, and yet he had been growling for weeks at having no 'prentice, and Furrow's kinsman would be an honest lad. He led the new arrival into a back room, where the staircase came down along the side wall. There was a tool-bench under a barred window towards the dim light of the river, household cupboards, shelves and crockery, and on the hearth the last embers of a fire.

"You can lie there where it's warm," said the master. "Look in that cupboard. Tanzy pudding and cold goose pie. Doesn't matter which you take, there not being much of either. See those bottles on the floor under the tool bench. You'll find a drain of elderberry wine and currant wine, and raspberry cordial—and there is the pot—and the whole lot with a dust from the spice-box and a drop of boiling water, will make an excellent brew for a young man like you to sleep upon."

After this considerate indication of a hungry young man's supper, Mr. Buckle looked round to see if there

was anything else to keep him up. "If I had known you were coming, Meg might have made a pasty . . . A nice hour to apply for a situation!"

"The axle of the wagon broke, sir."

"Always some excuse. Good-night, and don't keep me any longer now. It's your own fault if you don't make yourself comfortable."

He went away up the stairs, with the door-key and the candle.

"My own fault if I don't make myself comfortable!" Even the light was gone. Luke with a grim sense of the joke set about providing for himself; for he had walked something like fifteen miles with very scant food. First he kicked the embers, and knelt down and blew the fire, till a flame sprang up. Then he was able to find another candle, in a flat silver sconce on the tool bench. Close to it were the flint and tinder-box. There was soon light. He made search for the remnant of goose pie and the tanzy pudding, not having the least idea what tanzy was, and wondering who was Meg that might have made a pasty.

When the scraps were found, there was not half a good meal in both. He had a spoon and knife; forks were still rare and unnecessary luxuries. The taste of pudding and pie made him wish hungrily for morning. Sniffing at the bottles on the floor under the bench, he selected the one that had most in it—currant wine perhaps, though it might have been elderberry or even gooseberry for any flavour that remained. No need of the spice box and the pot. But after the sour drain from the bottle, he found an earthen jar of cold water that tasted fresh and pure.

Then, blowing out the candle, he looked out at the dim lights of river craft, his face close against the glass and the bars. He listened to the booming and the rushing of the water down below, knelt awhile to say his first prayer in the house of strangers, then threw himself on the floor not far from the warm hearth. He fell fast asleep without one thought for the talk of Simon Rodge.

But in the middle of the night, something did touch him, and he woke. Distinctly he was aware of a footstep pressing the boards; and then the stairs creaked. He sat up. The plague ghost? No—that was Rodge's nonsense, meant to frighten him from coming here. But some one had gone up the stairs. Could the master have come down again? Not likely. And that footstep seemed to go up in three steps; Mr. Reuben Buckle couldn't do that. Listen!—rats—scampering somewhere under the floor—under the stairs!

He lighted the candle. Another scamper. There was evidently a cellar under the staircase; one saw the closed hatch, with a tub of water standing on it. No one could have gone down there; besides the wooden steps had creaked—quickly—lower step, middle, top!

He rubbed his eyes. Everything had the peculiar stillness of a room in the night. Only a clock behind the door ticked, with weights hanging down the wall. Well this would be a fine puzzle to make into a story by the fireside some day at home. And he would have a riddle for John and Michael. "When a 'prentice goes to London, what does he find hardest at first?—

22 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

Answer . . . The floor!" He laughed and fell asleep again.

The bells of St. Magnus, loud and near, woke him with a chime and six slow strokes for the hour. Shockingly late! At Bush Farm they rose with the sun in summer, and at this time of year before it was light.

The water tub looked as if he might wash off the dust of travel, and there was a rough towel behind the door. Then for a little while he knelt and lost sight of the room in the house of strangers, and the great river beyond the window flushed with red from the eastern sky. The master would almost certainly be of the new State Church. Quietly the 'prentice should hold to his own. Staunch and loyal, he knelt and said alone and in secret the familiar devotions—very much the same in those days as the morning prayers Bishop Challoner put into his book a century later—the home prayers, and likewise (as records prove now) the prison prayers of our Catholic forefathers—beginning with the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Creed. It was no small distraction to the new 'prentice to hear his master tapping at a door upstairs, and shouting, "Meg—Meg, my darling!—are you awake?"

Luke had kindled a fire and swept the room and put it in order before a light step came down the stairs. Here was "Meg, my darling"—Reuben Buckle's daughter.

She was a very childlike little person, her fair curls tucked away under a flat bit of cambric, drawn over the top of her head and fastened to the curls with

silver pins. An apron like a pinafore swathed all her small person from chin to shoes; her blue sleeves were tucked up for work, showing a pair of plump and dimpled arms.

She came, when Luke was flinging open the casement-window with a hand out between the bars. The sky had changed from a red flush to glorious pink and green and gold. She wished him good morrow, with the confidence of a child who does not know shyness. "I heard you coming last night," she said. "It was I that woke my father, when you were knocking." She laughed, with a pretty show of cleverness. "When he went down, I listened at the top of the stairs, because my Daddy is so afraid of thieves, and I would have run down to save him. Then he came to my door and told me who was come. 'Mr. Giles Furrow's nephew from the country,' he said. Are you going to live here? Oh—I am glad. Daddy will have company." The last word rather spoiled the compliment, and took the conceit out of Luke. "Isn't this a fine look-out from our window? See the Tower! That's the dreadful place away over there, with all the walls and little towers and the Traitor's Gate. I'm glad it's so far away—that terrible place. It's so pretty to see all the boats up and down the river here—and the ships!" Then she looked at the sky, and put her two hands together, and her eyes had the clear innocence of the eyes of a child. "Oh!—isn't it beautiful—the sunrise?"

She had come into his life with the rose and the gold of a new and splendid morning. They stood at

24 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

the window together, and the glory from the sky was on their faces.

“Oh! but I am losing time,” she said, turning round suddenly. “Do you like your ale spiced?”—A most practical little maid!

CHAPTER II.

THE SILVERSMITH'S ON THE BRIDGE

THE house was a brighter place at once for Meg's sweet presence. Luke had no idea of her age, or rather of her youth. For the big apron nearly swallowed her up, and made her look little; and yet her housekeeping ways were so wise, that Luke thought her demureness almost funny, and watched as if she were a child dressed up pretending to keep house for fun.

"What do you take for a morning draught?" she said, her pretty head on one side, and a large spoon held up to emphasize the question. "They have a drink and a bit of bread in London—not breakfast," Luke heard, and his heart went down with a bump. She chattered away:—"My father takes chocolate. That's the new powder. We buy it in Queen's Head Alley. Oh! but it is disgusting stuff. Here is the packet. Smell it! Does not it smell nasty—like an apothecary's shop? Fuff!—whuff!" Her dimpled face was puckered up for a moment. "Ah! there is the milk coming. Do you hear the milkmaid singing? Listen!—I have the key. Daddy pushes it under my door when he wakes me, or I could not have *my* morning draught. I take warm milk. You should see the milkmaids on May Day dancing after the fiddlers—

26 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

and the big cans all hung with flowers! Oh! but I'd love to be a milkmaid on May Day!"

A little chatterbox Meg was. A most unromantic stout female was yodelling lustily with a wooden yoke across her shoulders, and clattering tin cans at the door.

"Do you like London?" said little Mistress Meg, when he brought in their share of the milk. "Oh! but what a goose I am! How could you know anything about it yet?"

"I like it mightily," put in Luke, risking a humble glance of daring candour.

"But you don't know what a rough bad fellow is next door—the 'prentice they have taken at the Golden Hammer. When I see him, I run away. He reminds me of the man we saw at the 'fayre'—the man that was grinning through a horse collar; he got the prize for the ugliest grin. Here is my father coming down. I must boil up his chocolate. Are you a Papist?"

"I am a Catholic," the new 'prentice said quietly. "I think that is what you mean by a Papist, Mistress Meg." She was in sweet innocence and blameless ignorance.

"Mr. Giles Furrow was one;" she said, "that's why I thought you might be. We liked him ever so much. And when he was dying— . . . Oh! but I mustn't tell you now!"

The next moment Mr. Reuben Buckle came down the little staircase by the wall. He still wore the furred black velvet gown and small skull cap. Meg went to meet him, and put up both arms, and drew his

head within reach to kiss him on both cheeks, and to smooth his grey hair with her little hands.

"Daddy, Mr. Furrow looked as if he was going to faint, when I told him we only had a morning draught in London. He won't be alive at twelve."

"That will be very serious, my daughter," the silversmith said.

Luke protested he could wait till dinner time. Dinner was at noon in those days everywhere.

"Oh! no—you can't!" said the little mistress of the house, holding up a finger. "We have spiced beef, and cheese, and a basket of rolls from Farynor's. The basket is on the top shelf. Didn't my father find it last night? Oh!—you dear, bad Daddy—why didn't you feed him?"

Meg had her way. Luke had to eat a country breakfast instead of starving on a bite of bread and a draught of sugared ale.

"She rules this house." The silversmith nodded playfully at his daughter. "Well, young Furrow, if you like, begin the day with dinner."

"I made the mistake, sir, of bringing my country appetite."

"I observe," said the master, "that you brought your wit in the same bundle."

This morning he was good-humoured. He recognised Luke's will to work. When the shop was swept and the shutters were down, he called the new 'prentice to a corner among the glistening silver, and taking the boy confidentially by the front of the coat, he whispered, "Don't let my little Meg know what we are talking about, but did you hear anything in the night?"

"I heard the rats."

"Perhaps I ought to keep a dog," Reuben Buckle said, "to get rid of the rats. But when I had a dog, the brute went out and bit the watchman. And there!—if they had summoned me before the Justice, I might have lost money in a fine. They would hardly have put me in the pillory or the stocks; but the watchman does represent the law. A dog has drawbacks. Besides, a big dog is a monstrous waste, eating so much; and a small one is a nuisance, barking at customers. You are here instead of a dog, Furrow. What I mean is no insult. I dread thieves; that is why I keep an apprentice. Did you hear nothing else but the river and the rats? There was not a step on the stairs, was there?"

"Old boards creak," said Luke, for he saw the man trembling.

Mr. Reuben Buckle looked at him sharply from under shaggy eyebrows. First he leant round the post of the back room. "Hurry up, Meg. You're a long time over that basin of milk. Never mind putting the crockery away. Run upstairs, child, and chase the spiders."

When she had gone up out of hearing, he came back to Luke who had begun polishing the silver. "You won't be afraid, lad?"

"Afraid, sir! What do you think I am made of?"

"Well done, youngster. Then I'll tell you. They talk scurvy nonsense about the plague ghost. I don't mean your kinsman. He would never come back to harass me; indeed I did my part for his soul's salvation. This plague ghost they say comes where the sickness

has been; but it's all foul lies and nonsense. What I'm afraid of is thieves. Many a year has it taken me to scrape and save my bit of money. It's not much I have. It's all for Meg—that poor child, Meg.” A softness came over the man. This was a new view of Reuben Buckle whom folks called a skinflint and a miser.

He peeped round the front door of the shop and came back. “The new lad at the Golden Hammer has heard it through the wall. He offered to come in and sleep here; but he looks a cunning lout. I'd rather have a 'prentice of my own. I do be wondering if thieves could come in a boat and maybe get up under the timbers of the bridge. They might burrow in from the cellar like rats. There *are* steps here. They are looking for my money.” He shuddered. “They will kill me in my bed.”

“Give me a pistol, sir; and let me sit up and watch.”

“No, no; but listen—I have a cot-bed in the top back room—the store-room. Suppose we lay that bed outside of my door at night?” He nudged Luke. “A young man like you can sleep with one eye open.” He came close to Luke's ear, and whispered that his little hoard—“not much, you know—not much”—was under the floor of his bedroom cupboard with the big four-poster bedstead run against the cupboard door. “You see how they'd kill me to get my money.”

“But have courage, sir. They can't know it is there.”

The credulous old man had queer ideas. If water could be found by the divining rod, who could tell what way thieves had for tracing out money.

Luke was only too glad to accept a cot placed on

the top landing. That would be a good substitute for a dog's sleep in front of the hearth. His mind was a little exercised by that word about the death of Giles Furrow. "I did my part for his soul's salvation." What did that mean? Had he brought poor Uncle Giles some divine to argue—some Geneva preacher? No, that seemed impossible—quite unlike Reuben Buckle. Besides it was a case of plague. Something had happened; and that something was what Mistress Meg was going to tell when she heard her father coming and stopped short.

Luke had now to think about delivering the Squire's letter to Mr. Godfrey. When he mentioned a Squire and a manor-house his master was only too glad to hasten the delivery of the letter. Besides Justice Godfrey was a great man, and it was well-known he would have been knighted by the king before now, if he had not declined the honour.

Luke was hurried off to Hartshorn Lane. He was to go out by Lud Gate and along Fleet Street and the Strand. Justice Godfrey would be hearing his cases; he had a house on the wharf. The 'prentice was to be sure to mention "the Silver Cup on the Bridge"; and perhaps he could write and ask this gentleman at the Manor House if they might supply him with candlesticks or a dinner-service—or anything in a small way.

"Or we have just now a gold-lined tankard—mighty fine! Or he might like that snuff-box, fluted silver the shape of a shell. Or shoe buckles? . . . But *can* you write?"

"I can, sir." Luke did not explain that he was supposed to write as well as Mr. Arbor the schoolmaster.

A country youth was, indeed, more likely to be "no scholar." "I'm afraid Squire Pennifer gets his things from some silversmith with a name like Prance," he said.

"Ah!" The jaw of Mr. Reuben Buckle fell suddenly. "Miles Prance out Drury Lane way. They say he is a Papist, and that's the reason the Queen deals with him. People ought to keep to the old city shops. No one can buy better than the goods sold on London Bridge."

Luke hurried off. After traversing Strand, where the noblemen's houses and walled gardens were all along the south side, he found easily Hartshorn Lane, running down towards the river. Beyond a timber-yard guarded by a friendly dog, there was a paved court and a substantial house. Hearing that the letter was to be given into Mr. Godfrey's own hand, a clerk, called by the housekeeper 'Mr. Moor', led him across the yard to the waterside. Tree-trunks were being unloaded from a barge, men were sawing and stacking planks. From another barge rather costly coal that had come by sea was being shovelled out.

On the wharf stood Godfrey, the merchant and magistrate,—a tall, dark man, with a personality and appearance that could never be forgotten. Thick black eyebrows, black eyes, an aquiline nose almost grotesque, and a huge dark Stuart wig, made up a very sombre exterior. He wore a broad black hat and the usual rapier was at his side.

After breaking the seals and reading the letter—"Most kindly and courteous," he said. "Wants me on a visit to rest? Umph!—rather late in life to go mak-

32 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

ing holiday!" He looked straight at Luke; his full gaze was peculiarly kind. "We shall all have rest enough in the grave—ch lad?" The idea shocked a boy like Luke, but he forced a smile, not daring to differ from such an awe-inspiring man. "I'll write to Squire Pennifer." Godfrey drew a handful of money from his pocket and offered the messenger a silver coin. Luke drew back. He had not thought of being paid for a service done for the Squire of the Manor House. The magistrate smiled and dropped the coin into his pocket again. It was clear enough this boy was from the country. "It's easily seen you will never make your fortune. But you may do better. Some folks do much better—I hope you will. I myself have a great esteem for Mr. Pennifer too." How well he guessed Luke's motive! "They are very good people—the Papists—what was I saying? I mean the Pennifers . . . Well, well, I have had too much to think of this morning—a couple of bad street frays last night, and the whole gang of them swearing every man against the other. It addles one's brain trying to sort the lies. . . . I shall write, I promise you, and if Mr. Pennifer can cart his trees to Kingston, my barges can haul them down the river.—So you are newly come to London, lad? Have you work?"

"Yes, sir, at the Silver Cup on London Bridge—Mr. Reuben Buckle, the silversmith. He sells to the Court and—"

"Enough—enough! If you did not belong to another man, there's work for many hands here; and you have been to Squire Pennifer a faithful servant. Well,

well—isn't that everything?—all that the best of us can hope to be—a faithful and true servant?"

Luke said if he had not begun at the Silver Cup, he would have been glad to work at the wharf. He thanked the magistrate heartily; and the strong man's melancholy face lighted up, as if the grateful word of a country boy was some sort of consolation in a world that was too sophisticated and too base for honest men.

Making all speed back to London Bridge, Luke found Mr. Reuben Buckle almost unrecognizable in an enormous Stuart periwig, white ruffles and a purple suit with square cuffs heavily laced. When the master went to the tool-bench in the workshop, he hung up the fine coat on a nail, and substituted a black linen overall, which looked odd enough under the mane of fashionable curls that fell about head and shoulders.

The new apprentice began to learn the mysteries of molten metals and crucibles. He went to and from the fire at his master's word, watched mysterious processes and stood holding tools. In the evening he was given a sheet of paper to write home. The folded and sealed letter would be carried next morning to Cloak Lane when the Post Office was open; and if it was left there with a fee for carriage, it was certain to be taken out before the end of the week. Good leisurely old times!

Luke slept soundly on the cot drawn in front of his Master's door on the top landing. Every morning he met the silversmith's daughter. She was down early, with dimples and smiles, tucked up blue sleeve and apron, always with a great pretence of work.

34 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

When she had taken up her father's morning draught of coffee, she would sit down opposite Luke, who had made ready his own country breakfast; and she found plenty to talk about, while she spooned up her bread and milk, making unconsciously a charming picture, with that bit of cambric pinned by the corners on her bright hair and the truant curls escaping on her forehead.

"So you said you were a Papist?" Meg was blowing at a spoonful of bread and milk on the first Saturday morning. "I like Papists."

Startling and delicious! Before he could think what to say, she swallowed the spoonful and rattled on. "I ought not have said that word. Oh! but I *am* a goose; you won't mind, will you? You see it's Daddy's fault; he keeps calling things the wrong way. It's Catholics?—isn't it—but that's harder to say, and you know I don't understand. It does seem such a puzzling world."

"They say it *is* a queer world. But what puzzles you, Mistress Meg?"

She put another spoon of honey on the bread and milk, and evidently was sorting out her thoughts. "It's puzzling like this—my father thought ever so much of poor Mr. Giles Furrow. I think he was fonder of him than of anyone in the world—except little me, of course. But my father goes always to St. Magnus's at the end of the Bridge, just for the sacrament, for fear of being taken for one of the wrong sort—the Nonconformists?—that's it! If you don't take the sacrament in your parish church, you're a Non-conformist; so daddy went. But Mr. Giles Furrow

wouldn't go inside the door of St. Magnus's—not if his head was going to be chopped off!"

"Well done, my granduncle!"

"Maybe, you wouldn't either?"

"No—with God's help."

"Well, there it is," said Meg, with a pretty gesture of both hands, spread in air on each side of the steaming bowl. "Daddy is ever so good; and if it was good enough for him at St. Magnus's, it was good enough for Mr. Giles. It's so funny that it should matter where one says one's prayers. Daddy says all the respectable people go to St. Magnus's."

"All in the fashion," suggested Luke with a smile.

"Oh yes—it's shameful waste to see the embroidery the men have on their waistcoats. The wives can have no prettier on their gowns."

"That's all very nice," said Luke, "but the sacrament is different at St. Magnus's."

"It is the Bread and the Cup in remembrance," said the little maid with sudden reverence; "I know, Mr. Giles Furrow said it was Himself Christ left, and not bread. But why can't we believe just what we like, so long as we are good to each other?"

Luke smiled to hear her making theories, in perfect good faith, in the daring of her sweet ignorance. "Listen," he said, "Mistress Meg. Do you keep any account of the money you have to spend? Perhaps you do, you are such a clever housewife."

"Oh, yes," said Meg proudly. "Daddy bought me that red book that's on the shelf. But that's puzzling too. When I add my figures up, and when I add my

figures down, they always come out differently. I count on my fingers and get all sorts of things."

"How many of your totals are right?"

"Oh, they can't be *all* right! that's why figures are so tiresome. Of course one answer keeps coming right at last and all the rest are wrong," said Meg, not in the least perceiving the parallel. "If I count eleven and four are thirteen, and it ought to be," tapping the tips of her left hand fingers, "twelve, thirteen, fourteen,—".

"Just so," said the patient Luke smiling. "Two and two make four, and it makes all the worry if people say they mustn't make four but five." Meg's blue eyes were round with wonder, as she looked at him over the spoon. "There can be only one truth. In the same way, if my uncle Giles said one thing about religion and they said the opposite at St. Magnus's, one must have been right and the other wrong."

Meg looked puzzled. "But my daddy couldn't be wrong, could he? Does it matter really? People might be very good and think two and two were five."

"They would get their money into a nice muddle," laughed Luke.

"But *is* it like money?" said the sweet, illogical Meg. "See— isn't it this way?—There are many roads to London. And there must be many roads to Heaven. Daddy says the great thing is to be good to each other."

Luke could easily have argued—the boy that had studied once with a hope of Douay. But he did not want to mix controversy with this child's bowl of bread and milk on the third morning. Her heart might lead

her some day, better than that pretty inconsequent head. He was thinking Who it was that first told us to be good to each other, and how He gave other commands, including the command about being one with the Most Perfect Unity conceivable. He was thinking also how what Mr. Reuben Buckle had told his little daughter was only the second commandment of the law, with the first left out. And "with all thy mind" came into the first. He himself had learned many things from Amos Arbor—things more valuable even than writing and speaking. He had learned how to use his own intelligence, how to think and to reason.

"We ought to go to Heaven by Christ's own road," he said quietly. "It is true one might get to London by a long tramp round—one might get there and be forgiven for fooling about, if one knew no better. But do let me help you next time to add up the accounts, Mistress Meg. Let me see. . . . You were not here when my poor uncle died?"

"I was sent away to Chelsea," she said. "Daddy shut up the shop, but he stayed here with him till the end. He brought a priest to poor Mr. Giles too, for he wouldn't let him die asking for one. But no one must know that."

Meg looked at the new 'prentice with wonder. The sprightly lad said some word almost like a prayer, and his eyes looked moist with joy, while he thanked her for telling him.

"Mr. Giles Furrow had a little cross with a Figure on it," she went on. "And Daddy told me he had that buried with him, unknown to anyone, for poor Mr. Giles loved it and kissed it last thing. Don't you think

38 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

it was beautiful of Daddy to stay with him during the plague, when everyone else ran away?"

"It was great," said Luke. "It was just great!"

It was not surprising to the new apprentice that Mr. Reuben Buckle faithfully told him the way to the Bavarian Embassy Chapel in Lincoln's Inn Fields. That was far outside the walls, beyond Chancery Lane. On the Sunday morning Luke heard Mass there among a small crowd in an upper room, in awful and delicious nearness to the altar, amid haunting incense and the perfume of sacred wax. In all the houses of foreign ambassadors there were such Sunday morning gatherings; and there were also hidden away here and there, private "Mass-houses," illegal but accessible, raided sometimes but with no worse results than the plunder of vestments. The last execution of a priest had been twelve years ago—Mr. Southworth of Lancashire. It seemed a long lull. Elizabeth's statute was still law, but many thought, like Squire Pennifer, that peace was come to last for ever.

So far all went well at the Sign of the Silver Cup.

Luke was just a little inconvenienced by the attentions of the 'prentice next door. He could not venture out to polish up the signboard, but Rodge was out with his ladder too to polish the Golden Hammer.

CHAPTER III.

SIMON RODGE

THE 'prentice of the Golden Hammer had been always pestering Luke to spend an evening at the Pig and Post; and it was only after Christmas that Luke agreed to go for once—to get rid of him.

"I could learn you to play shuffleboard in one night," Rodge had said on top of his ladder, shaking a duster over the heads of the passers-by. "You'd make a hatful of money."

"Where is the Pig and Post?"

Rodge spat on the duster and delicately picked a few grains out of small corners on the gilding. "It's a mighty fine place up a yard."

Luke's Christmas that year was not happy, except for the midnight Mass in the Ambassadors' Chapel at Lincoln's Inn Fields. For that hour, peace was in the very breath of the holy night, peace and union with everyone he loved, amid the incense-laden air of the chapel. They were all united in one adoration, his people at home, then kneeling at the Manor House,—Mr. Arbor's heroes—and his father and the "great multitude" who had the Vision instead of the Mystery.

In the morning London rang a medley of bells, and company arrived at the Silver Cup to spend the day—

Mr. Samuel Buckle of Chelsea and his wife, all "mighty fine," and a swaggering fellow they called "Cousin Bob." They came along the Thames in one of the canopied rowing-boats that were the predecessors of the modern 'bus and tram-car. For the Thames was still the great highway of London.

The family sat in the best room on the first floor and feasted under sprigs of evergreens. Papists were carefully left unmentioned, for the word would have been like a call of "Rats!" within hearing of an alert dog. Just once the heavy and gorgeously clad gentleman remarked that there had been some mumming last night in the Queen's Chapel, and that the King did not care a snap of his fingers for that black little Portuguese; and then all the scandals of the Court were coming out, if the talk had not luckily been shunted to the Duke of York's inability to pay the Navy—which was a scandal of another sort—.

Mr. Samuel's wife, Henrietta Buckle, had one ruling passion. She prided herself on being the best housekeeper in Chelsea. Some conscientious scruples had troubled her about mince-pies, and her hand had "got out" for making them, since they were condemned by the late Parliament with other Popish idolatries and superstitions; but in the Christmas pageant of cookery she was glad mince-pies had outlived suppression—the little ovals that were supposed to be the shape of the Manger. "When you come to stay at Chelsea, Meg," she said, "I'll show you how I make pastry. Yours might have been worse! Is this two or three I have had?"

Little Meg found her spirit for housekeeping rather

damped by this stout lady with the Stuart curls and the great fleshy neck hung with pearls and a cape of lace. Samuel Buckle's wife was not of the Lely style, but of Rubens.

Luke, the 'prentice, might not have dined with such persons of quality if it had not been Christmas. When they were gone, he helped tired-out Meg to carry downstairs the plates, goblets and tankards. There had been a grand show of silver.

Cousin Bob was a plague, she said, sinking on a chair in the kitchen. "Cousin Samuel wants to have him buy an estate, but Bob Bludyer hates the country. He would know nothing about it—thinks cauliflowers grow on trees—yes, and strawberries on straw. They're all too mighty fine for me; Cousin Henrietta says our floors ought to be polished, because that's the way in France. I won't have our stairs polished and Daddy tumbling down! And cakes—they should be painted with sugar on top, or they're not fit to be eaten! Next time, I'll keep my cakes for you and me and Daddy."

Meg was very human. Cousin Henrietta's fault-finding had worried her almost to tears, and the self-complacent prosperity slightly hurt her. As for Bob Bludyer, the fop who wore a huge black curling wig in the Duke of Monmouth's style—she simply loathed him.

The year ran on past Easter and still the 'prentice next door at the Golden Hammer was waiting for Luke to fulfil his promise. They had not been yet to that revel of pennies and shuffleboard at the Pig and Post.

At last Luke definitely fixed a time. He would go that night and get done with it. That was the very moment when an irate man below began to use red-hot language and to shake his ladder—for the two 'prentices had, of course, been up polishing their sign-boards. There were two grandees waiting, making a great show of big hats and periwigs, gold-laced coats and dress swords; and they were storming and swearing like any two hucksters of Newgate Market, because they wanted to get into the silversmith's shop and Luke's ladder was in the way. He sprang down and lifted it to one side. The most lively of the two gentlemen of quality, a brisk little man, with bulging eyes, told him he was a good-for-nothing loon and he ought to get a sound clout on the head; and a fist, gloved in Spanish leather, was shaken in Luke's face.

The country-bred lad had an impulse to drop the ladder, charge like a bull and disgrace himself. And yet, Luke reflected, the fussy little tyrant was older than he was, and no match for him, and a boxing and wrestling bout on the Bridge would have angered Mr. Reuben Buckle. Afterwards he discovered that "the fussy little tyrant" was Mr. Pepys of the Navy Office. Luke Furrow had moments of humiliation, as he calmed down. A sudden provocation—and after all he had the pride and the rage of a Pagan! He felt painfully unlike Mr. Arbor's heroes.

The other man was Lord Brouncker; so he heard from Meg in the back room. Luke reconnoitred him round the door-post, and made up his mind that except for the finery a real live Lord looked very much like anybody else. Meanwhile Mr. Pepys in the shop was

talking incessantly. There was a certain simplicity in the great man's boasting. He was going to have a "noble cupboard" of plate—finer than anything Lord Sandwich had, or Penn or Batten or any of them. He bought the gold-lined tankard and called it a "noble tankard." He also bought the large snuff-box shaped like a double silver shell. The two letters "S" and "P" were to be engraved in monogram on both articles; and as a specimen of the mighty pretty design he left one of the book-plates made for the volumes in his new book-presses.

Luke perceived that he was not the only one interested in Mr. Pepys and his purchases. The leering face of Simon Rodge peeped now and again round the other door-post from the street.

When evening came, the two 'prentices went off to the Pig and Post—reluctantly enough on Luke's part, for he had no fancy for the mean and noisy inn that closed the end of a disreputable alley. The Pig and Post was crowded with young men of the 'prentice type, all talking at once in foul mouthed jargon about the tyranny of their various masters. The shuffleboard game went on in a dirty back room, under the smokey flare of horn lanterns hanging from the rafters. It was the great gambling excitement of the boys of the time, and the long table was marked with chalk lines, beyond which the players shot pennies, tipped from the table edge with finger and thumb. Simon Rodge "learned" Luke to play the game, and in a quarter of an hour the learner's pockets were empty.

"Haw! haw! Got no more? Mighty fine game, isn't it? Have a drink?"

For a long time Luke Furrow refused and watched the play and the squabbles of the rowdy apprentices round the table. It was late when the company shifted to make a circle, sitting on benches or lying on the floor about the hearth. At last Luke took two or three sups of spiced wine that Rodge had heated for him among the embers in a pewter pot. He flung the rest away. "Poisonous stuff! What did you put in it?" He stood up dazed.

"You've had too many pots of it to-night," Rodge told him brutally. "What?—are you going?"—Going! He wouldn't stop in this den another minute.

Simon Rodge had a new way to the Bridge—a way that led them by the dark river. They saw it first from a lane off Tower Street—the lanterns low down against the flood—the great mass of darkness that was London Tower, where lamps hung at the Traitor's Gate. Rodge wanted to cut a boat loose and go cruising. Not at that hour of the night!

"You're a coward!" Simon Rodge taunted him. "Do you mind how you chucked me into the pond when we were boys? Cheated—you did!—hooked your leg round mine and spun me. I'll wrestle with you now down there on the mud."

"Come along, you ass!" said Luke, not too politely. "We were only boys that day. You were twice as big as me, and it was only in the slime I rolled you—not into the pond. Oh, I remember; you told me to go and catch fish for Friday, and one of us *had* to go in. I gave you my rabbit after—little fool that I was—"

They still disputed. Simon Rodge never forgave anything. Somehow they arrived at the other end of

Thames Street and went under a gateway, and there was a door where somebody knocked heavily and Rodge was gone. Luke remembered nothing more, except that Mr. Reuben Buckle was furiously angry and that he himself lumbered somehow up the stairs . . . and then it was bright morning and he awoke on the cot at his master's door.

All the next day there was an awful silence. Even Meg kept out of his way and looked as if she had been crying. The master was searching the shelves and cupboards. He had looked three times under the tool-bench. That evening when the shutters were up, he tapped Luke on the shoulder and beckoned him to follow him up the stairs. He had the face of a judge going to announce a hanging.

"I shall tell him I was drugged," thought Luke, "he can hear all he likes about the Pig and Post."

CHAPTER IV.

LUKE FINDS "MR. WHITE "

THIS was the room over the shop, combined parlour and office, where they had dined at Christmas. There were shelves of ledgers and business papers. Moreover, here stood the case of viols, and Mistress Meg's spinet—the wiry predecessor of the modern piano. Mr. Reuben Buckle lighted a pair of candles and stood opposite his bewildered apprentice.

"I have found it out, Furrow," he said, "you had best tell me honestly—everything. Then back to Sussex you go. You had best take the chance I offer you. Confess, and it shall be kept quiet. It might be a matter of hanging."

Luke felt his face turn white. He started and stared at the master blankly.

"It's all mighty hard on me," Reuben Buckle began. "I took to you as I never took to anyone. I meant to treat you some day as if you were my own son." At the word there was a sob in his old voice, and he walked about jerking his arm. "You shouldn't have done this to me, Furrow. Your granduncle, Giles Furrow, that died here was a good man with a conscience. Heavens above!—what would he have thought of this?"

Luke could only stammer, "I don't know what on earth you're talking about, sir. I wasn't drunk, I was drugged."

"You have taken my silver!" Reuben Buckle's voice sank to a hoarse whisper. He took from under the breast of his velvet coat a coarse coloured handkerchief, which Luke with horror recognized as his own property. "Now, Furrow, my own hand found this in your bundle packed away under your bed." He unwrapped a small silver box made like a double shell. "Now tell me where the tankard is."

If the raftered ceiling of the room had fallen, Luke could not have received a greater shock. The whole place swam. He wished he could wake and find all this a nightmare.

"If that was in my bundle, someone put it there," he said promptly.

"Nonsense—confounded nonsense! There's no one in the house but my daughter and myself." The master shook an angry finger. "This snuff-box alone is worth forty shillings. Perhaps you don't know the penalty by law for a theft of forty shillings. It's the gallows."

That dried up Luke's throat, but his courage rose with the danger. He forced his voice and steadied it, "Even so, sir, if I were to go to Newgate and hang for this charge, I would go to my death innocent. I never stole your silver."

The master laid a hand on his arm with sudden pity. "Poor boy! I am not thinking of pressing the charge. I never would."

"To me it would not matter much, sir," Luke said,

48 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

rather defiantly. "I have been brought up to believe that guilt is the thing to fear—not death. But I would be sorry for my people. It would break their hearts."

"That's the point," said the silversmith. "And they are all kith and kin to my dead friend, Giles Furrow. I would be mighty slow to bring grief on his kindred. You stole my gold-lined tankard and the silver shell. Have you nothing to say for yourself? Why did you do it?"

"I did not do it, sir. That's all I have to say for myself."

"Stubborn!" muttered the master. "Have not I told you, my own hand found *my* property in *your* bundle."

"I do not doubt your word, sir, but it was not I who put it there."

"There is one possible excuse," said the silversmith, considering. "You did not know what you were doing last night. You were drunk, Furrow. Now if you can find the tankard—"

The 'prentice hurried out the truth in the quickest words, "I had only two sups, sir, at the Pig and Post. They must have put some poison in the wine that drugged me. I fell dead asleep the moment I lay down at your door and I woke with the day."

"So you will not take the excuse?"

"I cannot, sir. I will never go again to that infernal tavern, but I was not drinking there. What they take would kill me. I poured it on the hearth. But somehow I never slept so soundly before in my life as last night."

"I saw a chance for you and you have not taken it," said the master. "If you will not confess, you shall go back to your people."

"That, sir, would go far to break their hearts. They would know I had been sent back with my character gone—all this said against me."

"I wish you had thought of your people before."

To the sting of the taunt, Luke only answered, "I have done nothing to disgrace them. I can add no word to what I have said—not if it were to cost me my life."

"Obstinate liar!" said the master, under his breath. With a gesture of his hand he signed to the apprentice to go—there was nothing more to be said to him.

At the door of the room Luke turned back. He felt as if he were losing his senses in sheer bewilderment. How could he bear all this without some guide, some friend? But he knew where to find friend, confidant, councillor.

"It's a lot to ask, sir," he said with hesitation; "but if I might go out for an hour—a couple of hours . . . it's rather far?"

"You will be sure to come back?" The master thought of an accused man's fear and flight.

"Oh, yes, sir—on my word yes!"

It occurred to the silversmith that Furrow might know of some thief's storehouse from which ill-gotten goods could be raked out again. So he nodded:—"Yes, you can go. I hope they have not melted down the tankard. You are the luckiest lad in London to be going out without chained wrists and the sheriff's officers."

Luke thought it no use to speak; and, as it happened, silence was best.

The boy hurried off seeing no passer-by. His need of a confidant was desperate. He walked and ran as if he were indeed in flight, praying wildly in his heart that his hope might not be thwarted.

Out by Lud Gate. Under the overhanging houses in deep darkness by scant gleams of lantern light, he made his way through streets they called "the Liberties," and at last getting into an immense open space he took one of the paths across Lincoln's Inn Fields. Along the borders of the square "fields" lines of scattered houses showed the light of windows; and arrived at the western side he reached two large lamps flanking an archway. He was at the entrance to the house of the Bavarian Ambassador, but it was an untimely hour for the visit of a stranger. After his second knock one side of the double door was opened by a porter wearing a gaily coloured livery buttoned and braided with gold, and a small tight curled wig. The old servant cogitated and repeated Luke's request, having a nervous prudence and but little English.

"Vot you say? . . . Dies man anyvare—so he muss out-go?"

No, no this was not a sick call. Luke himself wanted to speak to a priest. He had then to prove he was really and truly "Katolisch." Luke tore the lining of his coat and showed the red silk *Agnes Dei*, marked with his mother's stitching—the little white cross and the attempt to portray a lamb.

"I know now zee face," said the man. "Vait! I go in zee house. Zum von veel go show you."

He came back with an English boy carrying a lantern. The guide led Luke out of the archway across the road, through a row of posts that bordered Lincoln's Inn Fields, along paths by trees and bushes and then by an archway into Chancery Lane. A few turns through narrow streets, and the boy with the lantern stopped at a door and knocked with his knuckles. It was rather a peculiar knock, three loud taps three times.

He asked for "Mr. White," and a servant-man plainly dressed told the visitor to come in. When his guide was gone, Luke waited in a narrow entrance hall wainscotted and lighted by a hanging lamp of wrought iron that filled the place with bars and twists of shadow. From upstairs came a refreshing medley of children's voices, romping shouts of very small boys, bursts of singing and child laughter. This was somebody's home and a happy one. The priest was here as a guest.

In the front room the servant in a quiet tentative voice passed on the request for Mr. White.

Out from that front room a gentleman stepped, shrewd and clever-looking, wonderfully kind, and carrying with him that air of self-possession and cheerfulness that gives weaker mortals courage. He gazed straight at Luke, seemed to examine him in an instant—summed him up.

"I have seen you at the house in Lincoln's Inn Fields," he said encouragingly. "So you would speak to Mr. White? Come on, my lad!"

Luke never forgot the charm of that "Come on!" There was joy in the voice. The poor 'prentice, who

was unutterably sad, could only look his thanks with one shy glance from brimming eyes. He had never expected such a welcome as the voice and the smile.

The master of the house had an indescribable attraction. It was something deeper than looks or ways or words. As far as exterior went, he was an ordinary man of position, in the thirties, with a distinct voice, quick judgment in his eyes, grace in his movements. He was dressed darkly but according to his rank. His suit was of sombre brown, with hardly a touch of the prevalent gold braiding; and ruffles of lace hung from under the broad cuffs over hands that were strong and fine. His forehead was shaded by abundant Stuart curls, and the masses of waving and curling dark brown hair fell in front of each shoulder. At rest, his was a keen and serious face; but when it lighted up his eyes smiled as well as his lips. That "Come on!" would have given courage to the most downcast heart on earth. Ah! where and when was this man to translate his own inspiration with the same word—again and again, "Come on, my soul"?

He knocked at a door far along the passage, put in his head and the bronze brown hair. Then he turned back, and beckoned to Luke ushering him in with courteous gesture. "The Father is finishing his Office; but he wishes you to come in and wait."

"Thank you, sir." A hint of anxiety perhaps crossed the face of the visitor. When he came to the house he had been cheered at first by the riotously merry noise upstairs and then by that amazing personality, so winning and so cheering. But now the sense of his own disgrace and danger swept over him

like a returning wave. After this interview he would be an outcast; he would have to leave London, his character gone, even if his life were spared.

The master of the house must have been a keen observer. His hand was on Luke's arm. "If the world has treated you badly, lad," he said softly, holding the boy for a moment, and leaning towards him, "you have come to the right place. Pour out your heart. Leave nothing unsaid. Perhaps he may have some happy news for you."

With the advice and the smile, he gently put Luke in at the door. Then his step was heard hurrying away at the staircase. The best of fathers, his coming awoke an outburst of greeting above. All the small voices wanted to tell him different things at once. Then there was a decorous silence; perhaps "Daddy" had explained that Mr. White was saying his Office.

Luke found himself in a large room, illuminated by firelight and by the soft radiance of candles somewhere out of sight. He was advancing round the curtains of a great four-post bedstead. After passing the hearth with its red glowing logs, he saw at the other side "Mr. White" in the better lighted part of the room, reading at a little table with a pair of candles. The figure was in black, the shoulders bent, the face thin and worn, the abundantly silvered hair almost grey falling to his collar in long locks. Over the book his lips moved rapidly. Without raising his head he held up a hand, that was almost transparent against the candlelight.

Luke stood at a little distance, not stirring a finger, perfectly quiet. He noticed, heaped on a carved oak

chair, a well-worn coat with touches of tarnished braid, a broad buckled hat, and the gauntleted gloves and ornamental sword that were part of every gentleman's dress. He knew the priest had to go abroad as an ordinary citizen or his apostolic work could not be done. "Jesuits and seminary priests!" The school-master at Burford had told him how those words were branded into the laws of the nation. Luke knew it was likely enough the name of Mr. White was another part of the disguise; but he had no idea the venerable priest was one of that Society that stood in the forefront of the struggle and bore the brunt of hatred in the Master's Name. Luke Furrow came weighed down with his burden of trouble, friendless, sorely in need of guidance, accused and defamed. His liberty might go next: all he wanted to know—was that this was a priest with anointed hands, whose lips had the power of healing and the words of life.

He stood waiting in silence with a glorious sense of having reached his journey's end. In a few moments they would speak. He was no longer alone. It would be soul to soul—the child to the father. He watched the light on the bowed head, listened to fitful murmurs of Latin words. Not by the wildest flight of imagination had Luke Furrow any foreboding that this worn face before him would one day look out over the roaring crowd at Tyburn Gallows.

As a boy he had learnt from Mr. Arbor about the persecution as if it were bygone history, not far past—still to be found in living memory, but done. There had been a lull and people thought such barbarous times were gone for ever. His grandfather's father

had heard Campion preach. There was a wonderful tradition of the conversions he made. Father Campion, the Jesuit, brought multitudes back to the Faith, and then he paid the price for his rich harvest. Luke knew all about it:—how there were two hurdles to be drawn at the horses' heels from Newgate to Tyburn that December day: how there was room for two condemned men on each hurdle—four priests, close to the last agony of sacrifice and close to the martyr's crown: and how only three went forth upon those hurdles, Campion and Sherwin and Briant, and the fourth gave in at the last and left his place on the hurdle empty. It showed the fierce trial that Tyburn meant. It made lesser men tremble lest they might "think themselves to stand."

Other details Luke knew from Mr. Arbor—how the great preacher was seized at a house, where he had given one of those sermons that swayed souls and changed whole lives: how he had been concealed, lying down in a hiding-hole between a floor and the ceiling rafters below: how he was dragged out thence with his brethren and brought to London, where the racking so maimed his hands, that he could not hold them up to plead before the Court in Westminster Hall, but he had to beg a friend out of charity to hold up the racked hands for him when he said the words "Not guilty." Luke Furrow had never gone out of New Gate near the prison since he was in London without thinking of Campion on the hurdle trying to bow his head to the empty niche above the gate, because there had once been a statue of Our Lady up there. Oh! those were great times—when the shouting rabble

crowded out by the country road to the gallows field near Tyburn brook, and the hanging of traitors was so often the martyrdom of priests and faithful laymen—terrible and glorious times that would never come again. So Luke Furrow had often thought; for with a Catholic Queen and palace chapels—the King's brother, the Duke of York, himself a convert—the violent laws in abeyance, the mind of the nation had altogether changed. The past was past.

Other details of the bygone time his zealous schoolmaster had passed on to Luke. He was familiar with the name of Father Robert Southwell, also a Jesuit, who wrote verses in his prison in the Tower of London. Mr. Arbor could repeat whole pages of "St. Peter's Complaint," the cadences falling like music:—"Be Thou Thyself though changeling I offend . . . Cleanse this defiled den . . . Redeem my lapse with ransom of Thy love . . . Cancel my debt—Sweet Jesus say Amen!" Scattered words of the Complaint had haunted Luke's memory—the imagery of the dungeon creeping into poetry, the heart of the martyr speaking his own longings to his Lord. It was hard to have kept "such bird in such a cage." Luke knew how that poor prisoner had been tortured to give names he would not betray, and how after three years the priest and poet came out to the free air at last, covered with vermin, to be dragged off to Tyburn field.

All this and much more Luke Furrow knew. He was not ignorant of what it meant to be a Jesuit or a seminary priest; for the laws were still unchanged. And yet he thought with Squire Pennifer that Catholics were going now from freedom to freedom. It

was true, a fitful persecution had taken its toll up and down the country under the first King James. There had been the scare called Gunpowder Plot, in which the madness of a few had been fostered by Cecil that it might be publicly suppressed: as well as other scares and suspicions, and trumped up accusations. As a matter of fact the hard time had never entirely ceased under either Stuarts or Commonwealth; but in those days without newspapers events passed sometimes unreported. The laws were there, and the spy and informer could always make money. Twelve years ago when Luke was at Bush Farm, a little boy of eight, they did not hear that Father Arrowsmith had gone to death in the North, followed two days after to the gallows by Herst, the Lancashire farmer. Public opinion was with Squire Pennifer; people thought this country would probably have no more of those gallows martyrdoms. Nothing was happening now beyond the robbery of a Mass-house or a sneer at the Papists.

All his consciousness of the past was suggested to Luke Furrow by the sight of this priest saying his Office in a citizen's back room, with a laced coat and useless rapier beside him on a chair.

"Mr. White" closed the breviary, and raised his head. The worn face relaxed into a tired look of welcome, with the hint of a smile.

"Father," said Luke stepping forward, "you do not know me; but I came—" Here was some slight hesitation, and he finished hurriedly—"I came to you because I have no friend and I do not know what to do."

The eyes of Mr. White looked up into the young

stranger's face, quietly, as if from depths of experience.

"It does not take long to know you, my son," he said. Possibly he was thinking of another youth who came to the Master for guidance, and who had the attraction of simplicity. In this country boy there was certainly "no guile." The priest was looking at him hard—looking beyond mere external ways and features. "Tell me," he said, "is it not true that you are a stranger here in London and some heartbreak has happened?"

Yes that was true. Luke Furrow knew that his soul had been read. He acknowledged the heart-break with a boyish quiver in his voice, and yet he had a man's self-control. Drawn by a gesture he went forward, and sank upon his knees, leaning against the arm of the chair. In a few moments he found himself doing exactly what had been suggested as he came in. He was pouring out his heart, conscious that he had ceased to be a stranger, that he was here as a son with a friend and father. More than that—the passing show of material things all fell away like a shadow. Nothing else mattered but the great realities. That passing show and shadow had obscured the light, and now he was outside of the world in the light of simple truth. Soul was speaking to soul.

When the candles had burned a little lower on the table, Luke was listening to words that came soothingly like oil upon wounds. It was a marvel how those words sank in; for the priest was only saying such things as the lowliest man or woman might hear from any fugitive missionary teaching the religion of the

Gospel on Sunday morning in any hidden Mass-house. There was nothing very learned in what he said, and nothing at all new; and possibly Luke had heard it all in other words over and over again. But the happy news his host had wished him came now with a force that was new life. And even as the boy listened, he realised that these were words to be remembered, to be hoarded, to be kept that he might ponder them in his heart.

By his own prayers written later in prison, one can easily judge what that martyr-priest would have said to a poor London apprentice falsely accused and feeling disgrace and danger hard to bear. He would have asked Who it was before us that was accused falsely, and he would have said that the servant is not greater than his master. He who hung continually in contemplation over the Passion of Christ (as his prison writings prove), would surely have set some of its details before anyone crushed with a sense of injury. Unmerited shame and ignomy, a load of insult and injustice, utter loneliness—these things abhorred by human hearts must have been put forward as so many claims to the privilege of close comradeship with the Divine Master. And certainly the priest who was to go to Tyburn taught him his own prison prayer—for the grace “not to be unworthy of our brethren who suffered much greater things and even death.”

We have still writings of Father Whitebread, the Jesuit provincial—words set down briefly in Newgate prison and still speaking to us with his own voice:—“We who are timorous at a sharp word, and still more at mention of a violent death, must not wonder if we

are invaded by sadness . . . We are not here to find our pleasure in this world's goods or this world's peace. . . . Let us not make the mistake of steering in the wrong direction; that would be like a ship bound for the East Indies taking her course west. . . . No; we are here to suffer with our Saviour, so as to be with Him afterwards where He is."

Oh! yes—Luke Furrow had heard all these things a hundred times; but the same truths came now with a new force, with a power of unction, making an indelible mark, sinking as oil sinks into the rock. After all, it was no common privilege to speak to a predestined martyr. What wonder if those who were to climb the gallows ladder at Tyburn received beforehand the only earthly reward they asked—the power to win souls?

When Luke stood up to face the world again, he felt as if he had been a boy indeed until now, and from this night he was come to manhood. His whole view of existence had changed. There was light. He saw things as they really were. Life, that had been so gloomy, was now illumined with a glorious colouring. He saw the meaning of it at last—saw things suddenly in their right proportions. Humiliation meant the veiled nearness of Christ, if he would but desire to walk with Him. It was all like sunrise. It was more. Already the mystic words seemed to have come true—"And there shall be a new Heaven and a new Earth."

It seemed to matter little what happened now in the external world.

But his counsellor had not neglected ordinary pru-

dence. "You are not the first who had silver put in his bundle," he said, with a worldly-wise smile, as they walked round the curtained four-poster, when Luke was going. "Did you ever hear of the cup of Joseph found in the sack of Benjamin?—found in Benjamin's bundle, because it was put there? Pray to clear up this matter as if work could do nothing; and work to clear it up, as if there were no prayer. That is the wisdom of our founder. And if you have to go back to your people again—my son, there will be no broken hearts, since there is no guilt. But it would be perilous to stay, if you are not granted the clearing of it; for whosoever has laid this snare would lay another. Remember, not to be unworthy of our brethren. *Vade in pace!*"

Luke Furrow left the house that night light of heart and of foot. In the London streets he did not notice the hurrying crowds, or the rain beginning to fall. The overhanging upper storeys were a partial shelter, but soon the shower hissed down heavily and gargoyles spouted water from the roofs. An occasional lantern showed rings on the pools along the middle of the stony alleys. In Luke's present state of mind, sunshine and rain were negligible circumstances very much alike.

CHAPTER V.

IN REUBEN BUCKLE'S SERVICE

LUKE FURROW lay awake on the narrow bed near his master's door. Like a too bright light, unearthly peace kept him awake. Past midnight he heard suddenly strange noises in the house next door—heavy footsteps mounting the tool-wright's stairs, men's voices. Then there sounded something like a split, a panel on the landing slid back, and a figure crept through the aperture. The panel was noiselessly closed, and the figure was standing up in the moonlight. It was Simon Rodge. He had his shoes in one hand and a pistol in the other.

So that was the thief. Luke watched him from under eyelids almost closed. The scoundrel—his treachery was sickening!

The moment Rodge was down the stairs, Furrow had slipped into his clothes and was following. He had the tinder-box and candle, and half-way down he stepped into the front room and felt for and detached from the wall a rapier that hung there for ornament. Then, leaning over the rail of the staircase that led into the workroom and kitchen, he struck a light, and saw Rodge pulling on his shoes by the hearth.

"That you, Furrow?" hissed the man springing up. "Get along, you cur, if you don't want me to shoot

you! You played me a scurvy trick, Luke Furrow, sending the searchers in after me. If I had been asleep, they would have laid me by the heels. You wanted to hang me—you mean beggar—you did! You needn't have been so frightened about yer own neck. I meant to divide fair. I played the game like that because old Buckle would never hang you. You sneaked on me, you hound, and now the game's up for us both."

There was not a bone of Rodge's body still. He shook with rage, repeating that Luke had sent those men to search the Golden Hammer. "You did, you devil, to save yer own skin! And I was going to share the plunder with you and play fair." He swore like a trooper and stammered with the effort of keeping his voice to a whisper. "Give me the key of the front door, or I'll kill you."

"You can't have it," said Luke, affecting a calmness he was far from feeling. "It's under my master's pillow!"

"A file then—quick!" Rodge clutched the window bars. In the darkness beyond the glass the back room was reflected, and the candle-flame blowing about.

"You would be heard filing the bar," Luke warned him.

"Get the front shutters down, then, and let me out. Those bloodhounds are in the house next door yet."

"There's a locked bar to the shutters," said Luke. "And hearken,—the watchman is outside calling the hour."

They stood opposite each other. The clock ticked on the wall.

"Don't have me die like a rat in a trap—and all through you!" Rodge was looking about, wild to escape, when Luke Furrow took advantage of an unwary moment, and springing on him made use of his skill as a wrestler learned at Burford "fayre." He wrenched the pistol away, and flung it with a splash into a tub of water.

"You beast!" gasped the disarmed thief.

"That's only to keep you from doing something you might be sorry for," said Furrow, master of the situation now. "Look here, Rodge—where's that tankard, and I'll see what I can do for you?"

Then Rodge threw up the sponge. The tankard was among the beams of the bridge, under the cellar of "The Hammer."—"Now let me out!"

All this time the tide was surging against the wooden piers down below; and all the time they could hear the subdued sound of search going on beyond the wooden wall.

"What else did you steal next door there? Now, honestly?"

"Only marked coppers; I'll swear to you that's all."

"Where will you go, if I let you out?"

"Straight to Chatham, and join up for the King's Navy. Bet yer life, I'll never go on this lay no more. I'll turn over a new leaf. There's worse than me in the King's Navy, and doing better than the land-lubbers. I'll go, and no pressing me neither."

"Good! Now look here, Rodge, if I move this tub, you can squeeze down into our cellar. It's pretty full of fire-wood. You won't mind the rats?"

"It's not a plan to lag me," Rodge said suspiciously,

as they moved the tub, and opened the trap-door. "I dunno ought I trust a Papist. You've a spite again' me. You could swear I was safe and give me up. Yer oath's nothing with an indulgence."

It was vile. It was exasperating. Luke Furrow had to remind himself that this was the common slander and the wretch knew no better. So he only said with rather withering brevity, "Don't be an ass, Rodge!" And stuffed the fellow down into the hole.

"You won't put the tub on top an' cop me?" Rodge pleaded, his chalk-white face with the hair tumbling about it, looking up out of the hatch. "Say you won't put the tub on top."

"Not I!" said Luke, hurrying to get done with him. "I'll stay in the shop close by and in the morning I'll see to it that you get away. This candle ought to be blown out. The ray might be seen from the river."

All night Luke sat in the darkness of the shop, watching and listening. The silver stock was all about, and he could not trust that trickster. He heard the searchers go from the Golden Hammer; and hour after hour the city clocks chimed far and near. But when morning came, he woke from a short sleep, and there was no one in the cellar. The fugitive was gone. The casement window of the first floor upstairs stood open; a man could easily have climbed out and dropped the short distance to the pavement.

And now Luke had to trust his master would not blame him for too much mercy. Also he hoped the gold-lined tankard would be found; for he had accepted the thief's information, being himself unsuspecting of deception. He pictured to himself the thank-

66 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

ful Simon Rodge securing a place in a boat for a few pence and far on his way now down the river to Greenwich. Probably he would tramp by easy stages to Chatham. Under naval discipline Rodge might do his duty at sea. Poor wretch!—he had never done it on land.

To the silversmith's surprise, the 'prentice brought in the morning draught of chocolate. At first the master thought it nothing short of insolence; and even when Luke told rapidly the story of the night, Reuben Buckle reserved his decision. He was not so sure the gold-lined tankard was among the beams of the bridge after all. But the morning was not far spent before the silversmith went confidentially to the Golden Hammer, saying his 'prentice had perhaps broken the law by giving the man his freedom in return for the property. The rogue that stole it, was gone to sea; he had not been hanged, and drowning was too good for him. But anyhow he was gone; and now might they investigate this question of stolen goods under the cellar? Reuben Buckle came back with the tankard; and that was the end of the matter.

"So you've spared his neck and sent him to join the King's Navy," he said to Luke, "and he might have had your neck in the noose. I've got my tankard, and I can't blame you. I believe Giles Furrow would have done the same. I'm sorry I wronged you, lad, but I'll make up—I'll make up. So he might have hanged you—and you let the rogue go. Ah well—'Blessed are the merciful!' And as for such as I—may the Lord forgive us all, and give us our chance some day!" It was a mysterious word; but Reuben

Buckle often hinted memories of which no one had the key.

After that, the silversmith had a way of saying, "My son Luke" to his 'prentice. And the boy was almost afraid he had had his reward, when Meg clasped her hands and looked straight in his face, with "Oh, I do love you, Luke, for forgiving him and letting him go."

The next business was to send home to the Navy Office the gold-lined tankard and also the silver snuff-box, both engraved with the monogram of Mr. Pepys.

The Chief Secretary of the Navy happened to be besieged by unpaid sailors on the day when Luke was to deliver the tankard. The quadrangle was full of men ready for rioting, brown-faced, brown-chested, long-haired, almost starved. They had a real grievance. In port after long service, they heard that King Charles had sent no supplies for their pay. Rumour said that one of those men from the warships had starved and died by the roadside. In a few days the sailors would have to be out again, manning the oaken battleships that carried the guns under mountains of sail. They had already faced the squadrons of Van Tromp and the other Dutch admirals, who were raiding the home coasts and even the mouth of the Thames. It was no wonder that the Navy Office was besieged, and that it is recorded in the famous Diary, that the baker's boy had to carry the Chief Secretary's pie along the leads of the roof one day, and to pass it down into the house so that the great Mr. Pepys might have his dinner.

The 'prentice from the Silver Cup on London Bridge

would have fared badly, but for a very courteous man, who was reasoning with the crowd about law and order, and at the same time distributing a handful of money to the worst cases. He helped Luke to slip by; and a pair of quick elegant hands with lace ruffles took the cloth-covered parcel in at a window, and, after twice hesitating, gave the messenger sixpence.

The sixpence could not possibly be carried past the ragged woman who was clinging to a starved-looking sailor's arm under the archway. Farther on, half-way down Seething Lane, Luke waited, because he saw his deliverer coming.

"Sir—sir—one moment! I want to thank you. That was my master's gold-lined tankard I had for Mr. Pepys."

"Oh—my fortune! It's well you didn't lose it. Are you from Prance's?"

"No sir, from the Silver Cup on the Bridge."

How well Luke knew him! Memories came of "Mr. White" and the house that sheltered him, the cheery voices of the children upstairs, the genial master's welcome—"Come on, my lad!"

"Ah! yes, the Silver Cup. I thought you might have been from Miles Prance's, because I know your face at Lincoln Inn's Fields. It was you that came to my house that night, wasn't it?"

"I wish you could tell Mr. White, sir, they found out that was a false tale they had against me," said Luke. "Tell him all goes well with the 'prentice that came to him. I'm clear, and Mr. Buckle is a good master."

"That's happy news," said the other. "But Mr.

White has gone from us. I have not often the honour of lodging him. He travels far."

And so they parted. Luke watched his friend, as he hurried away with a wave of the hand, a man of quick stride, wearing a broad hat and dark suit, ruffles hanging at his great square cuffs and a rapier at his side. A very ordinary man of position; yet there was something more. Courage and an indefinable joy breathed from his presence; he had "a way with him."

At the Sign of the Silver Cup Luke lived now, as they say, "on velvet"; Reuben Buckle was certainly making amends to "my son Luke." There was music on summer evenings when they made extraordinary noises upstairs with a large casement open. At first they tried the viols and Meg's spinet but Mr. Reuben Buckle grudged the money for strings and for tuning the keyed instrument. So they settled down to singing part-songs, while he beat time with a long spoon. Mr. Samuel Pepys, that many-sided man, had just composed "Beauty Retire," but it was hardly finished enough to be printed; and when Mr. Buckle asked him to name a part-song he recommended "Gaze not on Swans."

They practised when the shop was shut; two of the musicians having to make desperate efforts to keep serious. The western light came level on Luke trying to keep a grave face, and on Meg all laughter and gaiety with the sunshine getting into her eyes and gilding her curls.

"But why are we not to gaze on swans, Daddy? I just love to see them ducking their heads about in pairs on the river."

70 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

"Go on, child! It's a sort of figure of speech—eh, Luke?"

"Don't ask *me*, sir. It takes me all my time getting my notes."

"Oh, but I do know now!"—from Meg. "Perhaps it means that ducks and green peas are as good. Why should people want to cook swans? Beautiful things—it's a shame! You say they do have them, don't you, Daddy—for the Guild Banquets?"

"Don't lose time talking," her father would say, getting hotter and hotter in his great periwig, and beating time with the long silver spoon. "*Now*—all begin again! One—two—three—four!—Open your mouth, my son Luke. Now!—three—four!—'Gaze not—on—swans!'"

And never did they get farther than that, without a discord or an uproarious breakdown.

"Next year," said the silversmith, "my daughter will play the spinet well attuned; and I must take in hand the treble viol, for I have an ear. And you, my son Luke, must practise with the bass viol—the great one—when we get the strings. With patience and labour you will produce notes, but at first you will produce noises like a cow. You must persevere with it."

"Unless, sir, the neighbours send in."

The music of that "next year" never came.

One day the master said to the 'prentice at the work bench:—"In case anything should happen to me, you ought to know what is to be done about—what shall we say?—my few pence, that I have for Meg—my

little hoard that is up there under the cupboard floor. You will keep my secret?"

"I will, sir—trust me—on my faithful word."

Reuben Buckle closed his eyes, and bowed his head for a moment—as a sign of satisfaction.

"Very well! Now, my son Luke—there is a bag of the new gold guineas that the King is coining; and there is another bag of Spanish silver—pieces of eight: and a third bag of our own mixed silver money. I have scraped hard and hoarded for my little Meg." It crossed the mind of the 'prentice that he might have made easier terms with "Uncle Giles," but there was truly something of the miser in the grain of Reuben Buckle's nature, and—well, bygones were bygones, and there was no use in marring the present by ripping up the past!

"I have made my will," the master told him, "a proper will, writ on parchment by a lawyer. Things might be claimed by the wrong hand and squandered; and my work here has been all for Meg."

"The Furrows will never make trouble, sir."

"No, no—of course not the Furrows. But—now I think of it—maybe you have wondered why the Silver Cup does not belong to your people, instead of belonging to the Buckles?"

"I have thought of it, sir; but it was your affair and my granduncle's." Luke was prudent; he could not betray Meg's confiding chatter.

Reuben Buckle looked hard at the younger man, as if grave matters were going to be talked of; and the look implied that in this region of grave matters the position of Luke was not satisfactory. It was the first

time there had been the slightest hint of friction or division since the master took the 'prentice to his heart and began to make amends. "Giles Furrow was a Papist, and I paid the fines for him," he said bluntly. "The stock was the surety—the furniture, the house—everything. We were friends; we were partners. He was well content to make the bargain, that it was mine if he did not pay back. I paid the money—the worth of the lot, and more. It was his own fault; he would not appear at St. Magnus's, never went there—and I argued with him year after year. It was a fair transaction; we were friends to his last breath. When he was dying of the plague, he said he was glad he never put foot inside St. Magnus's. It was the fine or the prison—or the parish church—" with a jerk of his hand towards the Bridge End. "The loss was the man's own doing."

"You were very good to him, sir," said Luke. He could not have raised his eyes. The plain tale touched him; he was up against facts. The words echoed from that unforgotten voice. . . . "Our brethren who have suffered greater things!"

When he looked up, the deep-set eyes of the old silversmith were regarding him shrewdly, "It is a great disadvantage to be a Papist."

"In this world—perhaps," said Luke. "But we don't mind about that, sir." He did not want to argue with his master.

Then Mr. Buckle's tone became rather sharp. "I am older than you, lad, and I have never seen it an advantage to anyone. Against you yourself, my son, I have nothing to say; but I have this to say against

your religion—that it keeps a man from making money.”

“Oh—if that’s all, sir!” Luke smiled; it was hard not to laugh. He explained quietly, “*We* don’t reckon money the chief thing, sir.”

“But it *is*, if you have common sense. How can anyone live without it?”

“Oh! but, sir, it doesn’t come first. What do we all think of the man that sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver?”

Reuben Buckle swore aloud with a shout of anger. What was he talking about? What did he mean? He should speak when he was spoken to, and hold his tongue now. The hollow-eyed old silversmith was trembling with rage, he seemed to have changed into another man.

“You had better know in time,” he broke out,—“no Papist shall marry my daughter—it’s ruinous. My little maid goes in peace to St. Magnus’s, and I’ll give her to no man that would bring her into strife. She’s over there at Chelsea now and you might take a boat for her. Mind!—unless you want a broken head—no love-making.”

The silversmith threw on the tool-bench the money for the boat’s hire.

CHAPTER VI.

FARYNOR'S BAKERY

THE two were in a boat. Luke often pottered about in a boat with the master's leave, to give Meg air and sunshine; for really if the truth were known, the master wanted Luke some day to marry Meg, but he had made it clear she was not to marry a Papist. The view from below the bridge was a row of nineteen arches carrying a red-roofed street. On the Southwark bank one saw few houses and the Globe, and the fields: on the Middlesex bank a city of spires and gables, fortified towers and tree-tops, all backed by the hills of the country and by the distant purple uplands of Hertfordshire.

"They say London will be burned down some day," mused pretty Meg, leaning back in the boat, and looking out from under her blue hood, "My cousins at Chelsea are always saying that to frighten me."

Luke leant back to send the boat flying under the central arch, and he told her the Dutch could not come; it was not to be thought of, with Prince Rupert and Monck on the sea.

"It's not the Dutch they say will burn it." The pair of blue eyes under the hood looked bewildered and puzzled. "It makes me so cross to hear them, they keep saying the Papists will burn London; and I'm sure

they won't. Oh, what a goose I am! I keep forgetting I ought not to say Papists to you. They say monstrous cruel things and I tell them it can't be true, and then we fight—we do!—like cocks!"

Luke smiled to himself contentedly. "Thanks, Meg," he said, "but don't let them peck you."

She went on hardly heeding. "They say they wouldn't know a Papist for anything. So I have them there; I said one should not abuse people, when one didn't know them. And Mr. Giles Furrow was a Catholic—and I knew him. And then—well then, that's how it gets like cock-fighting. You don't know what it is to be only a little maid like me. They think I ought only speak of pot-herbs and jam. And I can't think of the words when I want them; and then they all start together and talk me down, and one can't hear one's own ears. What is a vixen? Uncle Samuel said I was a little vixen. I'm sure it's not anything nice. I told them the Papists had more charity, for they never said bad things against *them*. It makes me cry when they talk me down."

"You shouldn't cry, Meg; we can bear being abused."

"But it's not right; it just pushes me the opposite way. I told them I liked Papists."

Luke laughed.

"Oh, but my cousin Bob was the worst—Bob Bludger, you know—with the red velvet coat and the silly big black wig. He said he knew all about the Papists, because he knew an informer that went round to the Mass-houses."

"The traitor!" Luke murmured. He thought of

"perils from false brethren." It had always been possible—even from the beginning.

Then Meg rattled on, "I told Bob Bludyer it was not respectable to know a spy. Low company! Nothing a spy says can be believed; they are only telling lies for money. I told him that, and said he ought to be ashamed of himself! and then Cousin Bob and I fought."

Luke pulled at the oars, and smiled slightly to himself.

"Oh! yes," she said. "It's cock-fighting at Chelsea—that's the only word for it. Afterwards they told me I was too forward for a maid, and that Cousin Bob would never ask me to marry him if I spoke up for the Papists—and they thought I did it for sport, just to vex him. As if I'd marry Bob Bludyer! Did you ever hear such a thing? I said, 'don't like him, Cousin Samuel. I'd rather have my head chopped off!'"

The oarsman leaned back with the pull. The city church-bells were chiming the hour. The chime of a clock may sound like joy-bells. But he did not look at her.

"Fancy thinking of Bob!" she repeated. At this point Luke realised it was a brother-and-sister confidence. "I *would* rather have my head chopped off!"

"Or chop off his!" said Luke lightly, to make her laugh. "Never mind! They have worried you, Meg. You were good—ever so good—to try to fight our battles. . . . If you only knew. . . .!"

"If I knew what?"

"Oh—if you only knew what it really is!"

"What?—to be a Catholic? I'm not what my Chelsea cousins are, anyhow." The hood nodded with determination. "Whatever they are—I'm out of it. Why, they call Papists pests and vermin! That's not Christian. They say such vermin ought to be done away with by law." Her cheeks suddenly blazed and she made apology. "Forgive me, Luke; I should not have told that to *you*—but that was what drove me wild. Calling good people like you and Mr. Giles—" She stopped, struggling for self-control. "They said nobody has a right to pray except the King's way. And then Cousin Henrietta sniffed, and said the King didn't pray at all. I think the Catholics really love God, and hold to what they think right—worshipping in holes and corners, as Cousin Samuel says. I think sometimes I'd like to be a Papist just to vex him!" She said it with a delicious pout. For a moment Luke thought what a child she was after all.

"That would be the wrong reason, dear little Meg."

"Well, maybe it would," she admitted. She stopped and looked vaguely at the passing ripples, tears trembling in her eyes. And then Luke felt that she was a woman with a heart, and with right impressions deeper than words.

Margery Buckle's schooling had been at a country house at Islington, where prim and proper ladies brought up "a limited number" of girls in the duties of their state, teaching them to read, write, cypher, and embroider, to concoct household herbal remedies and to cook and preserve fruit, and also grounding them (sufficiently for women), in history and the outlines of

geography, and the principles of the Church by Law established.

But as a fact, the trite old calumnies against "the Papists" had never gone deep. She preferred house-keeping to books. Besides, her father and Mr. Giles Furrow had removed some the false impressions.

She knew something. In the boat, one day, she wanted to know and was it true or not—that the Pope started Gunpowder Plot. She thought surely not. "Your uncle said it was just a few—'loggerheads' he called them—fifty or sixty years ago, and they were led on to do it, just to get them caught. And that fat king—you know who I mean—the one with all the wives—when he took the abbeys, isn't it true that he grabbed a lot of money and the land? I mean, of course the grand lords did it. Oh! yes; your uncle told us about the monks of the Charterhouse, close to here in London, and how they were tied up against the posts of the prison, and left to starve and die; and a Catholic woman used to come on the roof and let down food and try to swing it to their mouths, until the gaoler caught her and stopped her. Oh, I'd have done it too! It was cruel—cruel. I can't help loving the people that went through all that—and held on—with their Mass and what they think right—in 'holes and corners.' "

She had not averted her eyes; she had just talked on with the big drops falling on her frock, while Luke to steer the boat leant upon one oar or the other, for she had forgotten her steering.

And then it was that Luke Furrow knew that he loved Meg. He could no more stop it than stop the

river. But not one word did he say, for it seemed a wrong time for turning her mind earthward from those Divine influences. His whole future lighted up before him as beautiful as the dawn they saw one morning from the Bridge. It was love; and there was no undoing it.

They had drifted for some time in silence, with the level western sunshine on her face, when suddenly she said, "Oh, Luke, we ought to hurry back. How selfish I am; I was near forgetting Daddy's supper." And then the boat turned straight for the riverside stairs at the bridge.

Those two went a-maying together—at least as far as taking a morning walk to the may-pole in the Strand and seeing the milk-maids and the sweeps and the dancing leaf-covered Jack-in-the-Green. The Jack was a mere cone of branches whirling with a pair of feet under it. It was a shock to Luke that the disguised figure pushed roughly against Meg and laughed aloud "Haw! haw!" in a voice he thought he recognised.

The month of May in 1666 was all blazing sunshine. The summer was going to be the hottest in living memory. One day when thunder began to roll, the citizens thought the Dutch were come at last; and when the Dutch squadrons really fought a four days' battle off the Essex coast, the Londoners thought it was thunder. At last they made up their minds that the noise was going on too long, and it must be a battle. And when the booming was over, the London merchants met—having neither wireless nor newspaper correspondents—and they decided that a battle of that

80 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

length was certainly a victory, and Admiral Van Tromp was by now "knocked into a cocked hat." As it happened they were wrong, and the real success was won some weeks later off the Gunfleet Shoals, not far from the modern Clacton. But the supposed defeat was celebrated by public rejoicing and bonfires in the street. Luke Furrow went out to see the bonfires, and of all men in the world he came upon Rodge—Simon Rodge, with a beard grown and his hat pulled over his eyes.

"I thought you were gone to the Navy," Luke blurted out.

The bearded man swore at him, hissing something about a "scurvy trick." "You did send the men to get me lagged that night, but I'll be even with you yet."

He was dodging off through the crowd, when Luke followed him. Why, he had saved the man's life. "Stop Rodge! You should get off to sea."

"My name's not Rodge." The bearded man tore his sleeve clear, and turned and struck out at him. Luke swung back to avoid the blow; and the next moment the smoke of the fire was blowing heavily between them.

Of that meeting Luke spoke no word at the Silver Cup.

So the year went on till the first of September. That was a Saturday and pretty Meg Buckle was so occupied with making a new "tabby-gown" that she forgot to get in the bread for Sunday. She had been stitching away by candlelight at a heap of silk patterned with light and dark blue; and in the language of those days, the two shades entitled it to be "tabby."

Luke offered to run round to the bake-house in Pudding Lane. Here was the basket. What was he to get? Three loaves and a roll?

She laughed merrily. "No, no Luke—three rolls and one loaf. How like a man to mix it up!" He left her laughing and darted out, closing the door after him.

It was dark. Luke Furrow went out under the middle arch of the Bridge Gate and found a Saturday night crowd swarming on the slope of Fish Street Hill—a crowd with drunken singers bawling songs, some folks gossiping and some folks fighting, and most trying to buy and sell in the midst of the turmoil. There was a crush round every street stall and hardly elbow room to pass. The candles and lanterns winced and the pitch-torches were blowing out. The wind was strangely hot. He hurried along Thames Street, the narrow thoroughfare parallel with the river. Here the taverns were bright and noisy, and a few little provision stores were still open, the 'prentices shouting from the doorways:—"Buy, buy!—What d'ye lack? What d'ye lack?"

There was no side walk. The citizens marched on the cobble-stones, hustling each other out of the way at the shouts of a horse-rider carter. The whole place was dark, except for the dim little candle-lit stores or a few bright house windows. Citizens were obliged by law to hang out lamps far apart, "till nine of the clock"; but the lamps had long ago been taken in.

Thames Street was a queer mixture of merchants' houses and warehouse sheds. Tallow and tar, and hemp, and brandy, and oil, made up the bulk of the

tonnage unloaded daily at the riverside wharves behind it. The owners of the cargoes had their mansions in Thames Street, with storage sheds close beside them or adjoining the houses at the back. The office was on the ground floor of the merchant's home. The great houses must have reeked of trade; but no one objected to a whiff of odours that meant riches. Thames Street smelt of all sorts of things that came over the sea in ships—the pungent tar redolent of the ocean, the heavy smell of hemp, the scent of spices, the fragrance of Eastern coffee, the sickening breath of Russian tallow.

Out of this narrow thoroughfare one of the first side alleys was Pudding Lane. To the right, it was a mere passage down to the wharves, a dismal place of hovels inhabited by the poor wharf labourers—their huts of rotten match-board smeared with pitch to keep out the damp. The part of Pudding Lane that went up to the left was wider—wide enough for one cart. It ran up from Thames Street, behind Fish Street, and contained good houses with jutting upper storeys and high gables. Ten doors from the corner, Mr. Farynor, the King's baker, had his premises in Pudding Lane.

There the bread was baked for Whitehall Palace. Luke Furrow had often thought what warm quarters the wealthy baker and his family had,—warm quarters and no objection to a few beetles. On floor above floor, those casements of diamond panes as wide as the whole front of the building, all belonged to Mr. Farynor's dwelling-house. He lived there, with his wife, a serving woman, and one of the bakers.

Whistling merrily, Luke stepped into the white-washed archway below and was met by the heat of the ovens and the hot smell of new bread. After the buffeting of the sultry wind, the archway was a sheltered place. Even with the oven-heat there was a draught here. Outside in the streets the breath of some hot desert seemed to be scorching London.

In the whitewashed archway, under the light of a transparent horn lantern, two rough fellows were sitting against the wall, playing pitch-and-toss. As he strode by, Luke felt his foot pulled; and when he nearly lurched over, there was a loud laugh—"Haw! haw!"—from low down near the wall.

Luke had recovered his balance with a jump. "So it's you!" he said, looking back. "Good night!" It would have been a bad joke to have found himself flung down; but he looked without a grudge at the idle wretch who was ruining his own life. He pitied Simon Rodge. The fellow ought to have gone to sea with the fleet. He had an out of work and out-at-elbows look about him. Luke Furrow would have stopped to speak, and made some suggestion for his help towards Chatham—he would even have run his hand into his own pocket to give a boat's hire, so that the ragged loafer could be off to the naval station to-morrow; but he knew that Simon Rodge, even in the gutter, would only bristle up and show fight. "Good night!" Luke called, and went on.

"A nice hour of night you come at!" Mr. Farynor's foreman shouted, looking from an open doorway, to the left. "What do you want? Three rolls and a loaf? Well, get along, you lazy lout!" Rodge in the

background was chuckling to hear Furrow abused. The foreman of the King's bakery knew this was Mr. Buckle's 'prentice from the Silver Cup on the Bridge, and the right way to treat an apprentice was to knock him about. "There's the bakehouse," said the foreman. "Down the steps! Stir yourself! Don't be lazy, expecting *me* to hand you things. You'll get the bread from the man down there, unless he kicks you out."

"Sorry I am so late!" said Luke, and then shut his lips tight, holding his temper desperately.

"I'd wager anything, Mr. Buckle sent you out hours ago," growled the man. "Some of you 'prentices lose time at every tavern."

An exquisitely happy chuckle, somewhere behind them in the archway!

The bread was forgotten. Luke's voice trembled, but he said not a word more than he meant to say. "I only heard it was wanting just now, sir."

"Forgotten! Do you think I don't know pretty Mistress Buckle better than that? Get along quick,—down those steps—or I'll give you a clout that'll send you down head first!"

Here came from the other end of the archway, an outburst of applauding "Haw-haws!"

Luke's thoughts were in a tempest. He felt his face quiver with anger; he could hardly keep his arms still. Farynor's foreman might have been caught in a wrestler's grip, if his hair had not been grey. A sort of madness seized Luke Furrow; his nails pricked the palms of his hands, only with the effort to keep still, while he stared at the man indignantly. He was not

used to being threatened and abused. His own master called him "My son!" and why should a stranger be free to affront him?

Then suddenly over Luke Furrow's mind there swept a memory. His wild eyes softened and saddened; the tense muscles of hand and wrist relaxed. How unworthy he was of his brethren—he that could not stand hard words! The passionate glare had faded out of his face, and he gazed around in a sort of disappointed confusion. It was grievous to know himself as he was—humiliating, salutary. Oh! where was the New Heaven and the New Earth? Here he was—so unlike his brethren, unable to bear a prick!

"What did you say?" demanded Farynor's foreman, edging up to him with clenched fist and protruding chin. "Young man—if you dare answer me back—I"

"I answered nothing," said Luke, self-controlled. "Am I to pay you here, sir, for the bread? I have come late, but you don't know what a surprise this is to me—not knowing the ways of London city."

After putting the money into the foreman's hand, he went with his basket down the steps. The rough-tempered man turned suddenly, and wreaked the rest of his anger upon the two players of pitch-and-toss, swearing at them, and hustling them out of the archway.

Arrived at the foot of the stone steps, Luke saw the glow of the bakehouse door at his left hand. The stone-paved bakery was a big place, intolerably hot, built partly under the house, and partly running out with its own roof, into the back yard. Stepping within,

he saw, all along on one side, the oven doors with red light under them. A man working there called to him to keep out of the way while the bavins were flung in. The other men were gone, the baker grumbled, and it was hard on one pair of hands to do everything. "Stand back, lad, while I throw in the bavins!"

Taking a few faggots from the floor, he flung them into an open oven, landing them upon their exact place on the fiery border of the tiles. Then the over door was banged. A pile of those faggots was on the floor, and a whole stack of them in the yard leaning against the brick-lined wall of the bakehouse. The baker said the last batch of bread would be "drawn" at ten o'clock.

Opposite those iron oven doors, that glowed with intolerable heat, tables were ranged along the wall, piled high with wooden trays, empty after Saturday's bread had been sold out. Under the tables were baskets of warm crescent rolls—perhaps for the Palace breakfast. From the rafters of the ceiling hung flitches of bacon, hot and moist almost to melting.

"You have a risky job here," said Luke, "but of course you know how to keep it safe. If there was a blaze here, in this place nobody could put it out." He only made the remark, while he stared about, waiting.

"Ay, ay," said the baker, "it would burn. But I've worked here now, man and boy, for twenty years."

The loaf and the rolls were put into the basket, with no further remark, except, "You have paid for them, lad?" and the answer, "I paid in the passage above," and "Good night!"

Luke Furrow went away up the stone steps again,

and along the archway. The foreman looked out from the side door, as he passed; but Luke went in silence as a discreet messenger, not running the risk of being flung out unceremoniously into Pudding Lane.

Arrived at the Sign of the Silver Cup, he forgot all about Farynor's and the provoking foreman; for little Meg had not only finished the blue silk gown, but she had slipped it on, and she had just run downstairs again to her father to have it admired. Her merry warm-hearted thanks more than repaid Luke for his excursion to the bakery.

"What do you think, Luke?" she said, repeating a question that she had put to her father, "wouldn't it be wrong for me to go in my tabby-gown to St. Magnus's to-morrow? I shall never be able to think what the clergyman is saying. Daddy wants me to go to church and look fine. But I think it would be best to look fine when the folks are going in. I could meet them all, and then come home and say my prayers properly."

"An excellent idea," said Luke gravely. There was something exquisitely attractive in the earnestness of the little maid; and yet she did so love her silk finery!

That night Luke found it hard to sleep in the heat under the roof. He had the top backroom now for his own quarters, partly a store place for silver stock, partly a depository for broken furniture. The casement stood wide open, but the sultry wind was still blowing, as from an African desert. He woke in the middle of the night and sprang up and listened at the window. There was a crowd in the distance.

A flicker was on the houses on the river bank be-

yond Thames Street, and there was a red tinge deepening above that spot. Sparks were driving across the sky with rolling smoke. Yes—he could smell the burning. There was the shout, and the glow; a roof had fallen in. It was a bad fire, and not very far off.

He put his clothes on hurriedly. There was often a small fire, most exciting but soon extinguished. This seemed fiercer, and somewhere over beyond Thames Street there was surely a great crowd. He might get the key from Mr. Reuben Buckle, to go out and see what was the matter. Oh! there again—something else had fallen in. He could see the flames now; the crowd roared louder; the smoke and the smell of charred wood came thickly drifting this way.

He went down to the large room over the shop, and put his head out of the casement, just in time to ask the watchman. Several groups from the Bridge—or from Southwark, were running by.

“Where’s the fire?”

“It’s in Pudding Lane,” said the watchman. “They say it’s at Mr. Farynor’s bakery. But they’ll soon put it out! . . . *That’s* all right! They’ll soon put it out.” Then he walked on, lantern in hand, banging his stick on the road, and stopping now and again to bawl lustily, “Past two o’clock, and a warm night—and a fire being put out, in Pudding Lane.”

“They’ll never put that out!” gasped Luke, and dashed upstairs to rouse his master. It was a bad fire away at the back of Thames Street, he said, when the locked door was unfastened. “It’s too near us to be safe, sir. Farynor’s bakery. But we won’t wake Meg just yet.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE GREAT FIRE

THE fire that began in Farynor's bakery was to rage for four days and nights, and at the end of that time the old timber-built city was to lie in ruins. So, by some chance spark, was the London that had lasted from mediæval times to the sixteen-hundreds, utterly destroyed. Four-fifths of the buildings within the walls lay in ashes. Night after night, the whole sky glowed and flickered. Day after day, the surrounding country was dim, reeking of charred wood, thick with fog under a red sun. For fifty miles the smoke of London's destruction went trailing. Sixty miles away, as far as Oxford, there was red mist instead of daylight. Thin fumes were to creep from smouldering cellars, even half a year after. Picturesque old London had disappeared for ever—except such remnants as the row of timbered houses that sight-seers may still find at Holborn Bars.

The beautiful city of spires was gone—the red-tiled gables, the overhanging storeys with all their quaint carving, the patterns of oak beams on white plastering, the casement windows diamond-paned across the whole front, the painted and gilded sign-boards down below. All gone! But the Great Fire was really a mercy to the citizens of London. It did

what nothing else could do. By burning out the labyrinth of unhealthy lanes, it swept away the Plague.

On the Sunday morning, London Bridge was in flames. On the Sunday night, Samuel Pepys, in a boat on the river, saw the Bridge with its houses "an arch of fire," and yet the wooden dwellings that fronted each other towards the farther end were saved, and the flames hardly reached into Southwark.

On the Monday evening, the fortress and palace, known as Baynard's Castle, on the Thames bank, westward of the Bridge, became one red-hot furnace, shooting out its masonry like bombs. By that time the river was thronged with boats, most of them laden down to the water's edge with rescued goods and refugees. All night the heavy barges moved perilously through a dense smoke fog among drifting wreckage of houses and floating pools of burning tallow.

On land, a panic and stampede went on. In the blocked streets men offered forty or fifty pounds for a cart. Samuel Pepys, in his Diary, tells of a friend of his in Thames Street, flinging out valuables to save them and letting his silver dishes roll on the road. The citizens crushed through the city gates with whatever they could carry. Multitudes camped outside the walls on every green space, such as Moorgate Fields, Finsbury Fields and that great western square of grass and bushes, known as Lincoln's Inn Fields. There was no system of insurance, and for thousands the loss of trade-stock and household goods meant absolute beggary. For a few, the Lombard Street goldsmiths had acted as bankers, but most well-off citizens

had their little hoard to embarrass the flight. Thieves added to the confusion in the closely thronged streets. The King himself had been seen standing about, directing the use of fire-buckets and syringes. The Trained Bands were out, the Volunteers of the Time. The Duke of York had brought a contingent of naval men by river, and they were blowing up houses with gunpowder in the hope of making gaps that the fire could not cross. Flying fragments blown by the hot wind crossed all those artificial gaps; flames broke out in new directions, and the panic was increased by a rumour that the whole conflagration was the work of malice.

Foreigners were attacked. A Frenchman, escaping with his stock of tennis-balls, was supposed to be carrying "fire-balls" and nearly killed. A Dutchman, lighting his oven at Westminster to bake bread for the people, was almost torn to pieces and only saved by being run into prison. A Portuguese man was well-nigh dragged limb from limb, because he had been seen putting something white on a ledge within an open door; but presently the "something white" was proved to be only a piece of bread.

Next came the time when the attack turned from the foreigners to the "Papists," for any old woman's gossip, or the paid evidence of mere boys, Catholics were pounced upon anywhere and run into the nearest jail. After a while, there being no cause against them, the prisoners were released; but seizure was no light matter, when the unhappy victim was jostled in a crowd and pelted with stones or mud.

Later on a Royal Commission was appointed to

enquire into the burning of London, and the Committee weighed all the evidence. The fire was known to have come from Farynor's bakery in Pudding Lane; but as to its origin and its spread, the King and Council gave their decision that "notwithstanding that many examinations have been taken with great care by the Lords of the Council and His Majesty's ministers, yet nothing hath yet been found to argue it to have been other than the hand of God upon us—a great wind and the season so very dry."

What had happened was the very thing Luke Furrow had thought of when he looked round the bakery that Saturday night. The ovens were "drawn at ten," but the man must have dropped a spark from his candle; for though at twelve the fires were dead out, by half-past one the house was full of smoke. The straw and faggots igniting at the back of the bakery sent blazing sparks to fall on Fish Street Hill. At the same time the fire was spreading in the opposite direction, down Thames Street; and when the warehouses and wharves of Thames Street had caught—the oil and tar, brandy and tallow, enough for a vast bonfire—nothing could save London.

By eight o'clock that Sunday morning, the people at the Silver Cup knew that the tower of St. Magnus's church, at the Bridge end, was burning and the bells had fallen down. Meg got ready a meal, for it was doubtful when they would taste food again. The hoard had been brought down from the top room and packed in a small open chest. Luke found a couple of young Irishmen as helpers, already familiar to him at the Embassy Chapel; and all together they

packed the stock of silver in everything soft that could be found and tied up the bales, and hired part of a boat. It seemed as if they would never reach the waterside steps; and when they carried some of the furniture and all the concealed stock down to the barge, they found that part of their space was already taken up. Two burly gentlemen had crushed in with their sedan-chairs and bearers. Coming late from a rout and hearing that Thames Street was on fire, they had made their chair men trot off with them for a guinea each to see the sport. Reuben Buckle recognised one of the two as the bloated, red-faced Lord Lauderdale, a favourite of the Merry Monarch. Lauderdale had been hard on the Covenanters in Scotland and looked upon Nonconformists anywhere as pests to be exterminated. As for the Catholics—it was likely enough his lordship would have wished them treated to a plentiful allowance of hemp and lead, as a service to the country. He was one of the patrons of the Silver Cup, who would never have gone inside its door if the owner was not staunch for Church as well as State.

In the boat he said the “reil or the Papists” had done this, and there was no use in “greetin’ nor scraughin’.” His lordship was talkative after a night’s wine, and himself notoriously ignorant of music, he sneered openly to see that Luke and his helpers had brought Meg’s spinet to be packed with the valuables in the barge. Those things he said, “wud hae been nae waur for a bouking,”—or no worse for a soaking! For himself, music made him sick, and the better it was, the more sick it made him.

Lord Lauderdale talked incessantly, till suddenly with a shuddering jerk, the barge stuck among a congestion of craft in smoke and darkness under an arch of the bridge. There was a dangerous lurch to one side. A heavier barge was pushing; timber was cracking. Meg caught her arm convulsively through her father's.

"Shut your eyes, Meg," said Luke, "it will be all right in a minute." His strong hand was on hers and her eyes closed.

But he saw what happened next. Evidently Reuben Buckle thought his last hour was come; for in a sudden clearing of the smoke, Luke saw the old silversmith's hand go up like a shadow, and touch his forehead and breast and shoulders. When they ran out into comparative light, Lord Lauderdale's bloated face bobbed towards Reuben Buckle.

"Dinna fear," he said, winking one of his swollen eyes, "my een are nae sae guid as they used to be, but I thocht I saw ye flickin' awa the smuts off yer twa shouldhers and yer weskit. 'Tis a bad habit, mon! But I'll haud my whisht! I'm not for spying nor speering. There's mony an honest carle strong for Church an' State, that would want to die like the gentry an' flick the soot off his coat, if he thought the boat was goin' doun." A sly look accompanied this sally; Lord Lauderdale wheezed and chuckled at his own joke. He searched his pockets for "the bawbees" and flung a guinea to the boatmen when he and his party got out at the waterside stairs.

"What's this?" roared the boatmen, "a guinea *each*

for the lot and two more for the chairs." There was no saving money in the Fire of London.

Reuben Buckle's goods were at last disembarked at Chelsea, late in the day. Here the riverside steps were near a church, and led directly to a garden end. That garden and the distant country house had once been the property of England's Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas More. He had gone to the Tower and to the block a century ago for holding to the Supremacy of the Pope and refusing to acknowledge Henry VIII as Head of the Church in England. In our times, the sculptured likeness of that great Englishman has been set up proudly as the memorial of one of the noblest and wisest of lawyers, in the centre of London's legal quarter, not far from the Law Courts. The brilliant Chancellor himself would have levelled piercing and witty argument against the modern Londoners, who set him up in stone and forget how he lived and why he died. For Sir Thomas More counted allegiance to the Pope the supreme point. He gave his life rather than swing round with the King and the bulk of the nation in rebellion against the Vicar of Christ. The men of this generation blindly missed the point.

It was here then at Chelsea, near the remnant of the great Chancellor's garden, that the refugees landed.

Darkness had fallen before the hand-cart from the Crown Inn made its last journey escorted by Luke up to Samuel Buckle's house.

London had been so inconsiderate as to get on fire and send filthy smoke to Chelsea; but that was not so lamentable to the mind of Mrs. Samuel as the arrival of her relations and the dumping down of cartloads of

goods. Reuben Buckle carried his thoughtlessness even further, and fell sick suffering from shock. They had to send for the local apothecary. Luke and Meg nursed him by turns, "Am I going to die?" he would say, looking out with hollow eyes from behind the white curtains of the four-poster.

Carrying down a tray, Meg on the stairs overheard the querulous voice of Cousin Henrietta in the hall:—"Very inconsiderate of Reuben. Bad enough to choke up the place with bundles and rubbish—but to come into anybody's house and fall sick!"

The girl was heartily wishing her poor father had been laid up at the Crown Inn—anywhere but here—when all at once she heard a tapping on the floor upstairs. Hastily she got rid of the tray, and ran back to her father, who was knocking with the stick that had been left at his bedside. It was Luke he wanted. There was something he had to say to Luke.

Night was falling and all day Luke Furrow had been in dire perplexity. He kept asking himself was there any word he ought to say to the master. What did that sign of the cross mean, when the water was lapping over the barge? Now he too had heard the knock on the floor and followed Meg up the narrow staircase. After a few moments, she came out of the room, and spoke to him over the banister.

"Hurry Luke, it is you he is asking for. There is something he has to tell you. He wants you to say a prayer."

For Reuben Buckle knew that he was dying before anyone else knew it. The doctor had not science enough to see it. His soul was passing, and no one

could call him back. There was straight and tremendous in front of him the Reality that he had tried not to think of. It was the inevitable—the only thing. He was going out beyond all these visible objects. Death had come—as perhaps the near prospect of it always comes—as a surprise. The world was falling away like a shadow; and he had to live beyond it and to return here no more.

Luke Furrow went into the room. A candle was on the table at the farther side near the curtained window; and shaded from its direct light by the white hangings of the bed, Reuben Buckle lay propped up with pillows. There was a startling change in him. His grey locks peeped from under the familiar little black furred cap; but his skin with the straggling growth of beard, looked like drawn parchment. The sunken eyes gazed feebly out of the socket-holes of the skull.

“Dear master—you wanted me?” Luke sank on his knees at the bedside, with a touch that was a caress on the bony old hand.

The voice answered in gasps and sighs. “Not going to get over this. . . . Can’t think! It affrights me . . . unhappy man . . . Nothing settled . . . Too late now.”

“No—not too late; it is never too late! You are one of us, sir, and I know it. Don’t be afraid to tell me, sir. I saw that sign of the Cross.”

“That’s so!” It was a whisper, little more than a breathing. Then, while Luke held the left hand, the right made an effort to lift itself and touch the forehead, and it dropped down in the attempt to move from side to side.

"Then, sir, say these words after me first—and you shall have a priest. You shall, dear master, to-night, no matter where I find him!"

A murmur began, Luke's voice whispering an avowal of sorrow, and the faint breath repeating word by word as if the words were so many sighs.

"Now I am going," said Luke, pressing his lips for one moment on the hand he had held. Meg moved out of the way. She had been kneeling near the door, her face refusing to betray its trouble, the drops on her eyelashes not allowed to fall.

Luke Furrow went out, his thoughts bent on one purpose. He saw no one at the crowded river steps. The Great Fire of London had ceased to be the supreme interest.

The boatmen refused to stop till they were at Queen Hythe steps. He had meant to make for Lincoln's Inn Fields. The glowing sky was discernible through the smoke drift like the top of a red-hot oven. It took him long pushing and jostling to get up towards "Paul's"; and there he was wedged into the vast crowd helplessly.

The old gothic St. Paul's was all ablaze; and after some hours of burning, the roof was crashing in, thundering down even through the pavement into the crypt, where the booksellers of Paternoster Row had stored their books in the mistaken hope of fire-proof security. Lombard Street, the place of the shops and homes of the wealthy goldsmiths, had sunk into ashes yesterday; and all the grand houses of Corne Hill, with their rich carved fronts and tiers of casements, and their gilded

signs. But Paul's?—who ever thought Paul's could burn?

That year, as it happened, the building was being repaired. Scaffoldings had been erected for a survey, and the forest of poles and cross-beams made the place like a bonfire. The ancient cathedral had been desecrated long before, and the interior had been wrecked and robbed. That was colourless glass now splitting out of the windows; the priceless stained glass of Catholic days had been smashed as a Popish and superstitious thing, and replaced by uncoloured panes. Carloads of oak carving had long ago been carried off to be burned. The stalls of the choir, the carved wooden figures of saints decorating the organ-loft, had all been broken up and destroyed. Even the great rood-screen in the chancel-arch had been hacked down, and the oaken images of Christ Crucified and His Holy Mother and Saint John, had been called idolatrous and thrown into the public fire.

And what had come to the cathedral instead? At its western end, as part of the church, Inigo Jones had built an incongruous pillared portico, and this was filled up with hucksters' shops doing a brisk trade. There were stables in the cloisters. Another part of the sacred precincts was turned into a ninepin alley. The feeling of respect for "Paul's" as a sacred place was so utterly gone, that a soldier had been known to ride his horse up the front steps and right in, for a wager. A small part of the main building was barricaded off for religious worship; but most of the cathedral was only a city promenade, a place for busi-

ness appointments. Men met and walked and talked "in Paul's."

And now this was the end of the desecrated shrine! The earliest cathedral had stood there as far back as Saxon times. Mass had been offered on that spot for nearly a thousand years—before Henry the Eighth, or Elizabeth, or Protestantism was thought of. This burning pile had once been rich in chantry chapels, endowed to be places of prayer for the dead. On one terrible day in Elizabeth's reign, about a hundred years before, at the order of Grindal, the State-elected Bishop of London, the fifty altars of St. Paul's cathedral were all thrown down in twenty-four hours.

And if there was to arise another "St. Paul's"—no matter how stupendous a dome might surmount it, and no matter how it might stand to the nation as a Valhalla of heroes' tombs—the real glory was all gone with the ancient Faith.

Knowing only that this place had once been holy, Luke Furrow pressed his way through the crowd. It was awful to see the fate of the cathedral; but he was on an errand that forbade delay. The old gothic pile had stood more alone than the modern building, the church-yard making an open space around it. The crowd was dense and noisy, but no one dared press near the scorching heat. One could see through rifts of the thick walls into a red-hot furnace. Molten lead poured like silver from the edges of the roof in steaming and hissing streams; and amid the roar and crackling of the fire, blocks of stone shot out like grenades, driving the crowd back in momentary terror.

"The Lord save us!—was there ever such a fire?"

said an Irish voice close to Luke, and there was one of his two helpers well remembered since the Sunday morning. The very man he wanted! Luke whispered a few words. "I am stuck fast in the crowd here, and I wanted to get to the Fields."

"Come along with me. Sure I know where there's one—and not far from here. Push after me out of this!"

Meanwhile, in the house at Chelsea, everyone had retired for the night, somewhat callously—everyone except poor Meg. Cousin Samuel's wife told the girl this might go on for weeks. Meg said patiently that Luke would soon come, and he would watch for the remainder of the night.

"Where is he gone?" the lady asked sharply.

"He is gone for someone that he thought might do my father good."

"Well," said Cousin Henrietta vigorously, "if that doesn't beat all the stupidity I ever heard of! As if one doctor was not enough! Two will kill him. *I'll* have nothing to do with it; *I won't* see him." And she flounced away.

While the night wore on, the girl went again and again to look out into the darkness from the edge of the window curtain. Her father was breathing heavily, asleep or unconscious. At last he stirred, and said her name. Hope sprang within her. Now he was conscious again. She slipped an arm round his neck, to raise his head, and he drank a few sips from a silver cup.

"Daddy dear," she said tenderly, "Luke is gone to

bring a priest to you. It's hours since he went, so he will surely come soon now."

The head of the sick man slightly nodded, and for a moment his eyes closed. Then he looked at her again, and gasped phrase by phrase,—“If he does not find one, it will be according to my deeds. But it was all not to let you be poor—all to make money for you, child! . . . Ah, me!—it all ends like this—no matter how long life is! 'Twas a foolish thing I did—for life comes to an end, and where is one then? If I'd the chance over again, Meg, I'd hold to my creed, and face it out—for one comes to this at the last. I paid a bad price for the money, child. Give some of it for my poor soul. . . . Luke will take care of you, when I am gone."

"Yes, Daddy dear!" The tears were streaming down her face.

He shut his eyes and began murmuring about Judas; he was groaning secret half-articulate prayers. Her troubled heart could offer no comfort. Suddenly his eyes opened.

"My daughter—you will go to Luke's people. No one will worry you there. . . . Luke must have all the silver—all the stock from the Silver Cup."

"Daddy dear, the Lord will take care of me, and let us pray to Him now." She remembered the drift of it, but not all the words of that last prayer, that Luke had said so slowly at the bedside before he went out. Her father's lips were again moistened from the goblet on the table, and then kneeling down, she began Luke's prayer, the hoarse whisper following. The holy Name was most reverently spoken in tender

pleading, and then the words went on—"Who died on the Cross for me. . . . I am sorry . . . with all my heart——"

So far her clear voice went, and so far he followed, and then his eyes had closed; he breathed, but he spoke no more. Suddenly a soft tapping began downstairs at the front door.

Meg gently slipped her hands free, and rose, and took the candle. Quickly and noiselessly as a shadow, she went down the steep stairs.

Two were at the door. Good faithful Luke!—he had been hours and hours away, but he had succeeded in his quest. A little grey man was there, muffled in a cloak. Luke, with the candle, led him up the narrow stairs. The visitor had slipped off his hat, but he spoke to no one. The light was bright on his silver hair.

They went, all three, into the room above. The dying man took no notice of his coming. He was beyond any power of movement. Except a faint breathing, there was no sign of life. But it was all the more wonderful to Meg to see how the power of the mysterious holy anointing was to follow the undying soul into the depths of this transitory unconsciousness. She knelt, while the last prayers were said from the priest's book. After murmuring the Latin, now and again he spoke aloud in English a luminous phrase. Thus before touching with the holy oil the unmoving lips and hands and feet, the key was given to understand the outward sign of the sacrament: "Through this holy unction and through His most tender mercy, may the Lord pardon thee—" In a flash she knew what the anointing of the senses meant.

While the "recommendation of the departing soul" went on, a few translated words sank into the girl's deepest heart, and told what her birthright was. The mists of death seemed to roll aside, giving solemn and glorious glimpse of the life beyond. It was all a revelation of a calm unearthly power stretching out into eternity and treating as a mere incident the transition we call death.

Following the Latin, the English was being given, that the listeners might join: "Go forth, O Christian soul, out of this world,"—and then the adjuration that sums up with tremendous force the Divine claim and the priceless worth of the departing spirit—created—redeemed—sanctified: "go forth in the Name of Him who created thee . . . who redeemed thee . . . who sanctified thee!" After a long interval came the words, "May foulest Satan with his crew give way before thee; may he tremble at thy coming among angels that attend thee!" Again the Divine claim asserting itself—revelation after revelation to the listener of what it meant to "go forth" as a child of the Church. . . . "May Christ, who vouchsafed to die for thee, deliver thee from everlasting death! . . . Mayest thou behold thy Redeemer face to face, and standing always in His presence, gaze with blessed eyes on the open vision of truth." . . . "Receive, O Lord, thy servant into the place of salvation, of which he hath no hope but in Thy Mercy!"

In a few moments after the last "Amen," all was over. Luke sent Meg to rouse her cousins, and went down with the priest, going out with him, and walk-

ing in the smoky darkness under the red moon, until he refused escort any farther.

"You will see to that little maid, his daughter," the priest said at parting. "She prayed with us, so she cannot be far off. And as for Reuben Buckle—I saw him last but a year ago. He came to me in the night, when the plague was bad, and brought me to another deathbed. I had no idea he was one of us then. It was a case of plague, and no one was going near the house, so I easily went in and out. The Lord in His most tender mercy has not forsaken him in his hour of need. *Requiescat!* And now don't lose sight of that child that prayed with us."

How could Luke ever lose sight of her? He went back to the house that night, thankful, triumphant. And when they sat on the deep window-seat of the cousins' parlour, and the candle showed her eyes red with weeping and it was still far from dawn, Meg spoke freely, "When you were gone out first, Luke, he talked to me a little while, quite himself." . . . "I want to learn the Faith. Any way—after what I have heard I would want it—crave for it—now. I am not to stop here—so *he* said. I am to go to Bush Farm, if they will have me there. You will take care of me Luke. Your people shall be my people—as Ruth said long ago."

CHAPTER VIII.

“WHEN MEN SHALL REVILE YE”

THE Crown Inn at Chelsea was full of refugees from the Great Fire. Luke had only a corner of the loft where he could lie upon hay in the company of three burnt-out merchants and a strolling flute-player. It was the man with the flute who began wondering one night whether Old Buckle's son would turn up now to get the money. Luke Furrow, with an air of superior knowledge told him there was no son—only a daughter.

“That's the young lady by the second marriage,” the flutist said. “The son was a rare wastrel, and they parted. He was a gentleman of the road at one time, down Hounslow way. I go around to the taverns and see the world, you know. Maybe, I've been hearing about the Buckles longer than you have.”

Maybe;—but Luke Furrow hesitated to believe it.

The day after the funeral he was to dine at Mr. Samuel Buckle's. There had been no question of black clothing for anybody when all the shops of London city were burnt out. Luke had used his old holiday suit for packing his master's silver in the flight; so he had only to brush a few streaks of the clinging hay off his coat when he went to dine at the Buckles, to wash at the pump and smooth his bobbed brown hair, and to

buy from one of the merchants ruffles for neck and wrists. So having done the best he could, he hurried off to dinner at twelve.

The meal was served in an oak-furnished dining-room looking towards the garden; the table-cloth was of finest snow-white linen, and the silver—all bought in former days from the Cup on the Bridge—showed the style and taste of the household. It was not so very long ago, only in the time of the present Merry Monarch's grandfather, King James, that forks had come into general use; but here they had plenty of silver ones, even on a week-day. The viands and the wines provided were of a quality and an abundance sufficient to overawe a simple lad like Luke and to provoke the admiration of Bob Bludyer. Meanwhile the smoke of the London Fire rested like a warm haze on the Chelsea garden, and the lighting of the room was dim.

Meg had come down to dinner, pale and silent, wearing an old gown of the dingy shade they called sad colour. She met Luke with a glance of understanding and a loving pressure of the hand, as those meet who are conscious of a bond of sympathy between them unknown to the outer world.

As for Mr. Samuel at the dinner, he was not in the least perturbed by the dire event that had happened in the house. His grey periwig had been newly curled for the funeral and made a pompous setting for his double-chinned countenance. His snuff-coloured suit boasted huge cuffs, gilt buttons and gold lace. His burly calves were sheathed in white silk stockings. A

topaz-stone pin was in his lace cravat and jewels sparkled on his fat fingers.

Cousin Henrietta was of course "mighty fine," and revelling in the dinner. She found in such feasts the sense of success that sustained her as a woman, a wife, and the best housekeeper in Chelsea. After all it was an amazing thing to get so much happiness out of food and linen-presses, the compounding of cakes and jam, and the general astonishing of friends and neighbours by a well-ordered and highly polished house. Perhaps Samuel came in somewhere; but he was not in the foreground.

At dinner she entertained Meg with talk of the kitchen wenches. Cousin Henrietta was rather proud to do as she had heard Mrs. Pepys did. The kitchen wenches were called up at two o'clock in the morning—or rather in the night—when the tremendous ceremony of washing the linen had to be started, so that it might be all out on the lawn to bleach with the first sunshine. Fortunately this function only happened every few weeks. At Christmas, when the maids had to have the geese and game plucked and stuffed, the cakes and pies baked, and the bag puddings boiled—in *their* state of life they didn't expect to go to bed at all.

Bob Bludyer entertained the company by talking incessantly about Lord Somebody-or-other, and how they went sight-seeing as near the ruins as they could go, without scorching their feet or smothering with smoke. "The Papists have played us a scurvy trick at last," he said—"the vermin!"

Meg's eyes appealed to Luke.

"You don't really think the Catholics caused this

calamity?" Luke Furrow said, with a tone that implied something of contempt for his judgment.

Bob Bludyer started at being addressed by "poor old Buckle's apprentice," and loftily stared at him.

"Of course they did, Furrow," Mr. Samuel broke out, "everyone says so. Atrocious monsters! They ought to be all hanged."

Cousin Henrietta after murmuring, "wicked creatures!" sent her plate for a second supply of roast goose and savoury stuffing. She waited, with another sigh over the turpitude of the Papists; but Samuel had been set busy carving.

Then Luke spoke out in that clear voice of his that Mr. Arbor had once trained so carefully. He said quietly that there was going to be a Government enquiry as to the cause of the Fire, and he thought it would be an act of true citizenship and loyalty—as well as an act of common justice,—to wait for the result of that enquiry, before judging anybody. They should hear first what the King and his Council had to say. "I do not believe, sir," he said, suddenly facing Bob Bludyer—"I do not believe for a moment that the Papists caused this calamity. People judge them who have no idea what the Catholics really are. Goodness knows, they proved their loyalty to His Majesty the King—proved it with their blood—and died in scores for his father before him. Is it fair for any of us to accuse people without knowing them? I would not accuse any man in private affairs merely out of prejudice, and I hope you would not either."

Mr. Samuel Buckle listened, clutching his knife and fork at the edge of the table and flaming with rage.

"'Pon my word, a nice speech! Pity you can't be in Parliament. Some of you young men think yourselves wiser than your elders. If you don't take care where you talk, you'll get your pate cracked."

His wife interposed, wanting to know whether he would have the mulberry tarts brought in or the stewed medlars. "There are apricocks out there," she said, "that will drop off and get bruised, if you don't gather them, Samuel." Then she gave another of her deep sighs, and Meg heard her say, under her breath, something about "sons of Belial," and "The desires of the wicked shall perish." It was perhaps fortunate that ladies were not supposed to join in political conversation, or indeed to know anything about politics.

After dinner, Samuel Buckle invited Luke pointedly to fetch a basket and get those "apricocks." It was evident there was some private business to be talked of.

The old Chelsea garden was very pleasant and restful, with its level turf, its scattered trees, and the warm brick wall covered with fruit branches. The red sun shone small and seemingly transparent in a fog-laden sky. Everywhere was the odour of burning, a faint smell of charred wood in the still warm air.

Samuel Buckle's ground was a fine walled garden with brick-paved paths, whole beds of gillyflowers run to seed and ranges of those spires of blossom that they called "hollyoaks" then. That Chelsea garden, as well as the much larger gardens surrounding Sir Thomas More's house, has been submerged long ago in the spreading sea of London streets. Only a narrow strip of the martyred Chancellor's grounds still remains, a bit of green running down towards the river. It is

well that part of his land is a convent garden, and there the mulberry tree of Blessed Thomas More still grows.

As Luke carried the basket beside Mr. Samuel Buckle, he was wondering if Meg had yet spoken about a journey to Sussex. But he soon found that she was too timid in that house to have told her plans yet. Samuel Buckle had come out to arrange private business of his own. He cautiously glanced back towards the house and then put a hand on Luke's sleeve. "I want you to come to-night and dig a hole. We are going to bury my brother Reuben's money."

Now for the question, "Had he a son, sir?"

"He had; but the scoundrel died of the plague." That seemed to settle the strolling player's story. Luke said his master had made "a good will drawn up by a lawyer." Mr. Samuel Buckle had decided that he himself should have a share after all the upset. "Perhaps the parchment will be found somewhere among the stock; Mistress Meg will not want to keep it all."

"I hope, sir, you will let her come to us in the country for awhile, as her father wished."

Samuel Buckle said curtly that the proper place for Margery Buckle was with her own kindred. "She will marry Mr. Bob Bludyer."

Luke kept his courage up, "Mr. Reuben himself did not expect that marriage, sir. The very last night he said she was to stay with us in the country."

"Is this the old case of the 'prentice and his master's daughter?" sneered Mr. Samuel. "You are making a mistake, young man, if it is. My brother Reuben was

not in his right wits after we left him that night. What else did he say?"

"He was as sensible as any man could be, sir. He told us he was a Catholic—"

"Stuff and nonsense! He gave all that up long ago."

"But he repented bitterly of giving it up, sir. He said if he had the chance over again, if he saw things as he saw them now at the end, he would face the world and be true to his creed. I brought him a priest, sir, and he died as he began."

Samuel Buckle shook a fist at him, "You serpent!"

"Thank you, sir, for so frankly letting me know your opinion of me. But that does not alter matters."

"Do you mean to say you brought a Popish priest into my house?"

"I did," said Luke quietly; "and the roof did not fall."

"Get out of my garden, you insolent cur!"

Luke smiled. "You don't mean that. Mr. Samuel, this will blow over. What about burying that money to-night? Indeed in these times, no store of coin is safe above ground."

"You are a Papist yourself," snarled the other.

"I am—thank God," said Luke. "But even in this unhappy apostate country that's not a hanging matter yet. Now let us agree to be friends, sir. I have told you Mr. Reuben's wish and my mother would be proud to receive Mistress Meg for a visit. I could hire saddle-horses or a coach."

"You've confounded impudence," said the other. In fact he became brutal. No member of the Buckle

family required the escort or the advice of a conceited dog of an apprentice. "You forget," he said, "that until a few days ago, you were polishing the silver and sweeping the floor of the 'Cup,' and now you expect me to believe my dying brother was in his right wits when he told you to take my niece away, to lodge with country clod-hoppers under thatch."

Luke's memory flashed back to an evening when he knelt amid infinite peace to learn for the first time how and why to suffer. He kept his patience, but he had to do something of a tilt against Mr. Samuel Buckle. The prize was the Faith of Margery. He had to win her freedom.

"We are not quite clod-hoppers, sir," he said, "perhaps I can help you to know us better. It is true I am learning the trade of a silversmith; so did Mr. Reuben Buckle himself. As to our house, what does it matter whether it is thatched or tiled? I hope it is no impertinence for the Furrows of Burford to offer hospitality. I took care to say my mother would be proud to receive Mistress Meg. But in truth our family would be of more account now if we had not lost our lands, generation after generation, for conscience and for loyalty." Mr. Samuel was impatiently murmuring, "Yes, yes, of course"; but Luke would not stop, for there was a purpose in his argument, "My grandfather remembers when we owned the richest lands in all Sussex. He lost heavily in the service of the King—the father of his present Majesty. And we would do the same—everyone of us—again for this King now—God save him!" Luke was waxing rather hot; but was he not pleading for his people and putting up

a fight for Meg? "It will interest you to know, sir, that the King himself—this King reigning now—when he was travelling to the coast after Worcester did our house the honour of staying there for a night. *He* did not refuse our hospitality. *He* didn't ask whether the roof was thatched or tiled."

Mr. Samuel Buckle looked abashed. He came to a standstill to ask a few questions about the King's visit, and took snuff, and dusted his hot face with a red handkerchief.

"Very gratifying," he said, "you must pardon anything I said in haste about the Furrow family. At the same time, I hope I may remark without offense, that people who have lost money and position in the management of their own affairs, would do well to keep all their good advice for themselves. That was not business, you know. I am not sending my niece to the country."

"Sir," said Luke, with flashing eyes, "you surely don't imagine there is nothing higher in this world than money or rank. I take it loyalty of every sort is on a higher level altogether. Loyalty does not consider gain or loss."

"My dear young sir, take care you do not end in the gutter."

"I might do worse than end in the gutter," retorted Luke hotly.

Mr. Samuel Buckle shook his large grey wig—"Quite true. You might finish up with the hangman. You want a saving spice of prudence. Who knows—the Parliament may be top-dog again? or you might get yourself mixed up with the Pope's quarrel. Oh!

what it is to be young—and to talk without thinking.”

“We are wasting time, sir,” said Luke, abruptly. “What about burying this money? At what hour of the clock am I to come?”

They settled that practical point and gathered the apricots. The rest of the household were abed and asleep when he came that night to dig the hole under the mulberry tree. From that time, nothing he could say was of any avail to obtain a talk with Meg. She was never downstairs, never in sight from the door. She was reported to have all sorts of ailments. She had turned her ankle on the stairs a week ago waiting on her father, and said nothing about it. She had a “touch of the fever”; she had “the megrims.” But on the last morning, when Luke had already paid for his place in a Sussex cart, he went by the house and looked over the gate, at least to see Meg’s window. And the lattice flew open, and there was Meg in the sad-colour dress with her fair curls blowing about on her forehead. His brave little Meg of the Silver Cup. How he loved her! Across the paved court he called, “Come when you can; our house is your home.”

“Goodbye, I’ll remember,” she cried, kissing her fingers and waving her hand.

“Mother will write to you. Goodbye, sweetheart!”

“My love to her. Never fear—I’ll come!”

And then the casement closed.

It was a two days’ journey down into Sussex. At last the cart stopped at the Golden Lion at Burford,

and he sprang out stiff and hurried off with his bundle on his shoulder.

Very late that Saturday night the Furrows sat in a circle, as they used to sit long ago about the wide kitchen hearth and the blazing logs. The youngest son had come back unchanged, except for being a little older. Luke, the man, had the same affections, the same honest heart as Luke, the boy. And now they heard of the great Fire in London without exaggerations, for the wildest reports had reached Burford. The citizens had escaped with their lives, but every house was down and the Tower of London had fallen into the Thames. There was enough to tell, keeping the facts—the burning of the Bridge houses, the awful view from the river, the death of poor Mr. Reuben Buckle. They talked on till the old upright clock struck two.

“Is there Mass at the Manor House still?” Luke asked.

The grandfather said there was, but the Squire had said there might have to be a change. “They do be talking about the priest going; I dunno what will happen. Down there, at the Golden Lion someone said to Bowles the cowman, that they have it in Lunnon that we set the place afire. As if that isn’t the stoopidest lie the devil ever thought of yet!”

“Never mind what they say of us,” said the mother. “They wouldn’t be happy without some tale going round. The priest’s there to-morrow morning anyhow; for Sally saw the linen put out on the hedge when she took the butter down the lane to the back-door. Oh! look at the clock, children. It’s after two.

Come gran'father, John will give you a hand up the stairs. And Michael, you will put the ashes over the fire. Won't we all sleep well to-night, Luke—to have you home? But come now—'tis Sunday morning. We shall hardly be asleep before we have to be up again."

The Furrows had not many days to wait before Meg Buckle arrived. Room had been found for her in a travelling carriage of the leather sort wherein some ladies were journeying down into Sussex, drawn by four horses and escorted by a postillion with pistols. She had been fairly flung out of the Buckles' house after the arrival of a lawyer's letter, claiming Reuben Buckle's property for his son Jervis—who had *not* died of the plague, but was very much alive and determined to have his rights. The lawyer enclosed the copy of a will dated before the second marriage. No one was mentioned in it but "my son Jervis Buckle"; and the other will had undoubtedly perished, lost in the stampede from the Fire.

From the first moment, Luke's mother received the lonely girl as the daughter of the house. To Luke, the unimaginable had happened; his heart's delight was come.

Meg brought a wealth of love and life into the old farmhouse. She was at home with everyone at once, putting on the buckled shoes for the grandfather when he came in from the fields: then holding his old brown velvet coat and guiding his hands into its sleeves: sitting with him at the chimney corner, talking to him like the sweet chatterbox she used to be in the old house on the Bridge. And what a daughter she was

to her new mother! How pretty it was to see her putting an apron on and insisting upon helping! If she was only going out to look round the farm, she had a winsome way of running back from the open door to kiss "mother" again. All the live things loved her; the dogs and the young calf and the little long-legged donkey that followed her to the doorstep to be fed out of her hand.

On the Sunday mornings they all went to the Manor House to Mass. During the week the linen was out, as if to bleach on the hedge in the side lane. In many parts of England, in those days, that was the sign that the priest would be there on Sunday.

Luke had been over to the Manor House at his first coming to tell the Squire the news of the Great Fire. Meg Buckle was being instructed by Mrs. Pennifer, always going back in the Squire's coach at the end of a happy day.

Receiving her Faith "as a little child," she was soon given conditional baptism—an "if thou art not baptised." Then came the First Communion day, when Meg Buckle knelt dressed in white and veiled before the altar in the loft.

In the midst of the deep peace there came a warning of the danger that always hung over the little flock. In the loft of the Manor House that day the priest told them the time was coming when in all likelihood the Mass there would have to cease. "Those wicked slanders about the Fire of London" were causing the old laws against priests and Mass to be revived again. He might have to move farther on, so as not to endanger those who had so long sheltered

him. He told them to be ready for the evil day, for there was no one in that room—no Catholic in the kingdom—who knew what sacrifice might be asked of him or of her. As his text, the words of the Apocalypse rang again and again through the hidden chapel under the Manor House roof;—"Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown!"

CHAPTER IX.

LUKE ACQUIRES IMPORTANCE

SQUIRE PENNIFER called Luke into the library. The young 'prentice respectfully stood on the other side of the table and the Squire leant back in his arm-chair. Luke had no idea how much he had been talked about in the chatter of Meg to Mrs. Pennifer and no idea how much the Squire appreciated him. There was a plan now for sending the apprentice to the service of Miles Prance, the silversmith. Prance was great in his trade, patronised by the Queen and the Duke and Duchess of York. Luke said it was "mighty kind" and all he could wish for. It was true Mr. Reuben Buckle had certainly meant to leave him the whole stock of the Silver Cup on the Bridge; but both the apprentice and Meg Furrow felt that the silver had cost so dreadful a price, that it was well it was gone. An unworldly view, but a true one.

"I have said everything I can for you and told him you were entirely worthy of trust," said the Squire, folding and sealing his large square letter to "Mr. Miles Prance of Prince's Street, Drury Lane." "If there is a premium to be paid, he shall have it and you will look forward to a partnership. Mr. Prance is one of us; and I have told him the Furrows would need

no one to help them, if they had not lost their fortune for the King and for the Best of Causes. I have put capitals to 'the Best of Causes,' so he will know what I mean."

Luke tried to pour out his gratitude which was indeed beyond words. The future was bright. He almost forgot the warning note of the sermon in the chapel:—"Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown!"

When once he was fixed in his new master's service, he would begin to tell Meg. She would live with his mother and some day they would be married at Burford, and go up to London—and be happy ever after. Life was going to begin. He was an optimist that morning.

This mood of buoyant hope carried him gaily through the parting; and before half the week was out, he was at his journey's end up in London. He could not forbear taking a look round at the ruins. The magistrate of Hartshorn Lane was knighted now—Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey. He was in Holborn Valley by the stream seeing to the wooden booths and the rebuilding.

After a meal at the inn Luke took his bundle and went to Prince's Street, Drury Lane. Mr. Miles Prance had a fine shop with a window at each side of a curtained glass door—which was locked. The two bulging windows of small panes displayed only a few exquisite articles backed by hangings of green velvet. One showed a pair of candelabra, the other two tall flagons; and there were displayed duly glazed and framed orders for silver from Her Most Gracious

Majesty the Queen, who had patronised Prance for candlesticks, and from the Duke of York who had indulged in a dozen of spoons and one ladle.

Luke Furrow had tapped several times at the locked door before a footstep came and a man's voice asked who was there.

"I am come from Squire Pennifer—the Squire at Burford—*Pennifer*," Luke bawled.

An eye appeared at the edge of the curtain and looked him up and down. "What have you to show?"

Luke held up the letter and the eye scrutinised the writing. Then the lock clicked and bolts were drawn. The door opened. "Come in quickly," said Prance. And the door shut and the bolts were on again.

This was a larger and loftier place than the old Silver Cup on London Bridge; but it seemed hardly so comfortable. The silversmith was a weedy young man, pale and nervous-looking; gangs of thieves were about, he said, and nobody was safe. He would be glad of help and company. There was plenty to do. Squire Pennifer of Burford Manor House was one of his most valued customers; "patron" was his word. He seemed to work mostly for private patronage. There was a good dining-room behind the shop and the work-room was built still farther out into a yard. The housekeeper was spreading the table. Mr. Prance was going to sup and a serving-boy was putting more wood on the fire. Cold, he said, was the one thing he could not endure; he dreaded "a consumption."

Before they had finished talking over Luke's last service and his master's misfortunes, a lodger came down to share the meal. It was then Prance spoke

rather strangely as Luke thought, and put a finger on his lip to prevent anything being said about the rumours after the Fire.

Twilight was falling and the candles were being lighted, when a terrific knocking came to the street door. Someone was banging a staff against the shutter. Miles Prance turned white.

"Open for the watchman!" shouted a voice outside.

Luke offered to go and open it, but Prance caught him by the coat. "No, no! For the Lord's sake, keep still, and blow the candles out, so they'll think there's no one here. They won't see the firelight."

The thunder on the door began again.

Miles Prance stood trembling, white as a sheet.

"Let me go and open. I'm not afraid," said Luke. "We can't have the door broken down, sir!"

The knocking was renewed. "Say Yes sir, and I'll go; I care nothing!"

Prance handed him the key, and began loading a pistol.

"Look out first, and don't open more than an inch. The times are bad," said Prance.

Luke could have laughed.

But the moment the key turned and the bolts were drawn, the door was burst in. "Are you Furrow?" demanded a man's voice, loud and hard.

"I am. Keep your hands off me!"

Both arms were gripped with a painful tightness. Two men had seized him, calling out, "In the king's name!"

"What's this? What do you want?" He glared at the men.

"Luke Furrow—arrested in the King's name!" They pulled him out and banged the door.

"For what?" It was impossible to shake off their clutch of iron; and when he tried to make a fight by curling a strong foot about his captor's ankle, his own leg was seized by a third man, and he was nearly flung down. He was chained now, Fetters bound his wrists, and there was a pull of iron upon one of his legs.

Sheriff's officers! Talking two or three together, they told him they had a warrant to take possession of the body of Luke Furrow, silversmith's apprentice, late of the Silver Cup, London Bridge. They had been on his track since he was pointed out in Holborn; they knew he was the man. "Don't you deny it, or you'll get my fists in your teeth!"

"I am not denying it. Of course, I am Luke Furrow. But you have no business to set upon me like this. Arrested! What am I arrested for?"

"You know, young man!" The voice meant bullying accusation.

"I declare, I don't."

"You are arrested, you scoundrel, for setting the city of London on fire!"

Luke leant back and laughed aloud. He did. In spite of the painful clutch, in spite of all his danger, the infinite absurdity of it upset all his seriousness, and he flung back his head and laughed aloud in the street. There could not have been a stronger protest of innocence than that spontaneous laughter. One of the

men grinned, and almost joined him. But the third took it gruffly—a giant for strength, who had put the fetters on his leg and still held the end of the leg chain.

“It will be no laughing matter, when you get the evidence,” he said. “We can prove it.”

“Rubbish! You can’t prove what didn’t happen! . . . The Fire! . . . I had no more to do with it than the Man in the Moon. Don’t pull that chain; you’ll have me over. Tell me where I’ve got to go, and I’ll go. First of all, let me say—and keep this quite clear—Mr. Prance in the house there has nothing to do with me. I only came there this afternoon. Whatever you have against me, Mr. Prance is out of it; he knows nothing about it.”

“That’s so!” agreed the big man—the leader. “Well, you are coming with us to Newgate now, Furrow, and you had better come quietly, or you’ll get a knock on the head.”

From beyond the closed door, he heard at the last moment the feeble voice of his new master protesting that whatever the “broil” was, he had nothing to do with it. They had already been all bolted out. A respectable citizen did not want to be drawn into the trouble.

“What on earth have they got against me?” Luke asked of the three men, as he went along with a stride and a stumble in the middle of the group.

The sheriff’s officer said “the particklers” could be read under the next lamp, if he wanted ’em. Luke refused. “No thanks!” He would hear in time enough. With a charge of causing the Fire, a crowd

under a street lamp would mean ill usage. There was discomfort enough already, as he trudged through muddy streets in the dark, gripped at each arm, jerked by the chain on his ankle, and followed by an increasing rabble of ragged boys pressing upon the prisoner's heels with curiosity and a pitiless thirst for "sport."

At last the convoy reached the somewhat ruinous city gate—New Gate, close outside the prison. The gloomy stone wall stood undamaged; but what had really happened was the destruction of all the wood-work beyond it. The keeper's house was almost burnt out, and the fire had caught the wainscoting and ceilings of the warders' dwellings. The massive stone walls of the oldest wards had held the terrified prisoners in a panic verging on madness; and it was only later on, during the repairs, that they were removed for a time to Southwark.

Newgate Market was crowded and noisy. Down the middle of the street the stalls were ranged. The torches flared, and the butchers kept up a continuous shouting, "Buy, buy!—What d'ye lack?" If it had become known that a prisoner was being hustled past, accused of having caused the Great Fire of London, Luke would have risked being stunned by well-aimed stones, or at the very least hammered with blows on the back of his head.

Past enormous doors, and down a stone passage, and he found himself in a room lighted by a cluster of lanterns that stood ready on a table. The walls, once whitewashed, were blackened by smoke and fire. Festoons of iron chains and manacles hung up for decorations, and, bright and recently posted up, a

lively coloured print of a hanging, showing the crowd and Tyburn gallows, for the entertainment of any luckless prisoner newly brought in.

There was still a heavy smell of burning. Broken and charred shelves stood in one corner; half-burned ledgers were heaped in another.

At the ringing of a bell, the Governor—or Keeper as he was called in those days—came from an inner room by a doorway where the fire-marked door hung from its hinges. A red burly man was this keeper, broad and tall and of a swaggering military aspect. He wore a big felt hat cocked awry, and the gold lace was thick upon the huge square cuffs of his coat.

The warrant was read. It was for the arrest of “Luke Furrow, silversmith’s apprentice, on the charge of maliciously and with intent setting fire to the premises of one Farynor, a baker of Pudding Lane, on the night of Saturday the first of September in this present year, sixteen hundred and sixty-six, with the result of causing, as aforesaid, with malice prepense, the lamentable disaster which began an hour after midnight on the night preceding the second of September, and led to the loss of the lives of certain of His Majesty’s subjects, as well as the destroying of the house property goods and chattels of many thousands of persons, to the irremediable injury of the wealth of the Kingdom, and to the ruinous loss of the trade and prosperity of His Majesty’s City of London.”

This ponderous accusation was rolled out in sonorous words, and then the prisoner was asked if he had anything to say for himself. Luke almost smiled. His honest face lit up with a sense of wonder. “I have

simply to say this charge is all untrue," he said. "I had nothing to do with the fire at Farynor's bakery; and if you give me a fair trial, all that stuff in the warrant has not a leg to stand on."

"Did *you* hear that, sir? He called it 'stuff'—the King's warrant!" shouted the most bullying of the three men. "Of all the 'impident' rogues I ever laid hands on, this is the worst. Why, in the street, when I told him what he was charged with, he laughed in my face—at His Majesty's warrant. You wouldn't believe it, but he did, sir."

"Now don't twist things like that," argued Luke, almost impatiently. "The mistake you were making was ridiculous. His Majesty knew nothing about that."

Here the keeper of the jail interfered, and told the prisoner in sepulchral tones that perhaps he did not know this was a matter for hanging.

Luke started. His eyes opened wide. His blood ran cold. No, he had not realised that. He was still too bewildered to speak, not yet quite calm after the ghastly shock, when the governor gave his order: "To one of the cells—not to any of the wards! Leave him by himself till he appears. He is sharp enough without having the other rogues to sharpen his wits."

Then Luke was searched in silence. His pocket-knife was taken as a perquisite of the Crown. After the search, he was marched away.

Two warders with a lantern led him across a yard, and down stone steps to an underground passage. He lost count of the turns they took on that dismal journey, in the lower darkness amid damp cold air

and scurrying rats. Nor did he remember how many iron-studded doors were unfastened before him and locked after him. At last they came to cells opening into the stone passage, each cell having above its door an open half circle thickly barred. Into one of these cells he was taken, and the chains were removed from wrists and leg. While one man was unlocking the fetters, the other made an announcement in an expressionless voice like a verger or custodian giving a party of visitors a lecture learned by rote:

"These are samples of the lighter irons now in use. There are also irons of a heavier make, and with those heavier irons unmanageable prisoners are loaded and secured by order of the keeper and at the discretion of the turnkeys appointed by the Government of His Majesty the King. So it behoveth all prisoners not to show any manner of obstinacy, and not to withhold such information as may be required for the punishment of evil doers and the securing of the peace of the Realm."

After this exhortation, with its threat of question and torture, the two warders without further ceremony went straight off, locking and bolting the door after them; and their receding footsteps sounded along the stone passage, with much unlocking and locking of more remote doors. When the last echo was gone, Luke tried to see. The jailers had taken the lantern with them; but the whitewashed walls were becoming visible, near enough to be touched with both hands. He could feel an iron ring fixed in the wall—an ominous discovery. High up, opposite the closed entrance, the faintest light and a breadth of air

came from near the ceiling, through a small square opening crossed by bars. The outer darkness was beyond; but he could not see the night sky. He sat on a bench against the wall, feeling the slight draught from the outer world. Suddenly a song was howled; fortunately the words were muffled by distance, for they could hardly have been to an honest man's liking. Then there was a roar of imprecation from other men disturbed. Luke felt that loneliness was better than company.

He was thankful that no one at home knew his misery; no one suffered by sympathy and suspense.

Sometimes he paced about, three steps one way, and three steps back. After all, in his own soul, he was neither alone nor in darkness. Many a long colloquy he had during the night—this boy who had once looked forward to Douay and learned the mysteries of prayer and the history of imprisoned men. A hundred times he came back to the words of "Mr. White" and to that encouraging verse of the psalm, "*Quoniam in Me speravit, libera eum!*"

His brethren had been worse lodged, under judicial sentence for conscience's sake. Amos Arbor, his old master, had told him of a priest named Rishton, who was cooped up in the dungeon called Little Ease at the Tower of London, without room to stand up or to stretch at full length. And had he not heard of the dungeon under the Tower, where the rack worked, and how Father Campion, after the torture could not lift his own hand, but had it lifted for him to plead in Westminster Hall. Luke thought of these things, and felt that he was suffering nothing.

When he slept, on the bench, worn out with weariness, he was again in imagination kneeling beside a chair, with folded hands on a black robe. It was the unknown priest, who went by the name of "Mr. White." The words he knew by heart mingled with his exhausted wakings and his dreams. "Let us trust entirely to Him—rely on Him—ask for the grace not to be unworthy of Him in our small sufferings, nor unworthy of our brethren who have endured greater things for His Name."

It was refreshment to dream, that night of all nights, of the happy home he had never afterwards found—the home of kindness and holiness and of little children's voices. The moral of life's whole tale came like a slow cadence: "We are here to suffer with Christ, and to prepare to enter with Christ into His glory."

A clang of iron! He woke, and started about. Yesterday's reality came back. This chilly place was Newgate Prison. A dim light glimmered; and, turning, he saw a sort of tunnel from the barred aperture at the top of the wall towards the unseen upper earth. The warder was unlocking the door, and now came in with a pewter bowl and a lantern. He had set down a tray of such bowls in the passage outside; and in his free hand he carried a heavy bunch of keys and a strip of paper. Shutting the door with his back and leaning against it, he read:

"Number Ninety-seven, by name Luke Furrow—that's you, young man, isn't it? You have to be took afore the magistrate.—It will be a city Justice of the Peace, the crime having been committed in London

city. I am to enquire if you want to call counsel, Number Ninety-seven, for, if you do, the case must be held over."

"I'd rather have it at once," said Luke. "The sooner I'm tried, the sooner I get off."

"And I also have to inform you," the jailer went on, "that this here water-gruel is thin, and the bread of this establishment—such as this here chunk—is dry. And prison bread is not like other bread—having chaff in it, and going up and down to the wards maybe for a week before it gets eaten. But if you hand a bit of money to any of the jail officials to keep for you—for instance to me—there's Newgate Market nigh, and pork chops or poultry and a pot of ale can be had in at any time. My opinion is that this here gruel is too thin and sloppy for a fine young man like you to stand on for his life or death." While he gave Luke this grim reminder, he began dishing it about with the spoon held in the same hand as the prison keys.

"It's right enough, thanks," said Luke, who felt as if he could not swallow food till he was free. He took the basin and set it on the bench.

"Don't you make the mistake of being mean about money," said the turnkey, his politeness evaporating. "It's the worst thing any prisoner could do to begin mean. Spend your money and share round, or you'll be skin-and-bone yet and running after the charity basket. You came in with money Ninety-seven and it was left to you; and you won't be able to stand up against the evidence nohow—not on water gruel. When you come back to us—"

"Here!" interrupted Luke, tossing a silver coin into

his hand, "that's for your offer of fetching me better fare. But I want nothing, and you won't see me back here."

"Ah!" said the jailer, with a touch of pity for his ignorance, "that's the worst sign, young man. I've noticed them that's too sure are always the ones that get hanged. Now, there was a cock-sure gentleman came here for stopping the mail-coach. Very grand he was—gentleman of the road, you know—top-boots and gold buttons—"

"My friend," said Luke, "we shall hear about the top-boots and gold buttons another time. I have many things to think of and the porridge is getting cold."

At this broad hint, the turnkey wished him luck and took himself off, locking the door.

After a long time, another jailer came with a rattling chain, and saying it was nine of the clock and no time to lose. The man fettered Luke's hands and led him out with a tight grip on the arm. They traversed the passages by lantern light and mounted to the upper world. But as soon as Luke was led out into the street under a guard of three or four men, the whole rabble of Newgate market seemed to rush to surround him, and he was followed all the way to the magistrate's house by a hooting and hissing crowd, with an occasional tap of a small stone against his shoulder or head. Only for the presence of the guard, the escort of roughs looked ready to tear him without waiting for the formalities of the law.

The house of the City Justice of the Peace was behind a ruined street, one of the few stone buildings

that had escaped the fire. It was a haven of safety to the prisoner. He had thought it out that probably the accusation against him was based on his visit that Saturday to Farynor's bakery; but there was no evidence; the charge could not stand for five minutes. It was well known that a score of people had been accused and set free.

The crowd was noisy outside in the yard, but the public could not enter the magistrate's office, and Luke was set standing among a few quiet strangers opposite a table, while a gentleman with a large grey curled wig investigated his case and a clerk seated beside him made notes in an open book.

First the accusation was solemnly read by a man behind him in so pompous a voice, that Luke could have laughed had not the whole affair been so serious. Then the name of Charles Rockett was mentioned by the magistrate and a grand personage in "mighty fine" plum-colour, laced with silver, stepped from the small crowd behind him. To his horror, Luke realised that there was going to be evidence sworn against him. The grand personage in plum-colour had a look of Rodge, but he was absolutely disguised by a black fashionable wig of enormous curls. He opened his mouth. With the first word came certainty. *It was* Rodge,—hardly to be recognised he was getting on so amazingly in the world. And the things he said—the things he swore to! The prisoner stared about and gasped.

"O Lord—good Lord!" The words broke from Luke under his breath; and it was not a mere exclamation. He felt helpless before such an attack; for

the lies of Charles Rockett were presented plausibly, though they were absolutely outrageous.

"Sh—sh—sh—!" said the clerk.

Charles Rockett, otherwise Rodge, declared the prisoner was a Papist, and he had been seen last thing in Mr. Farynor's bakery before the outbreak of the fire. For a few moments after that word, "Papist," Luke breathed rapidly and his whole frame kindled with exaltation. He realised that, however inconvenient all this was, he had been raised suddenly in his unworthiness, to stand with his brethren who had "suffered greater things."

Rodge was going on with his evidence. He had been delayed that night to talk private affairs with a gentleman of the Court on his way across the Bridge into Southward. A vulgar accent and bad English seemed hardly compatible with the acquaintance of the witness with Court circles. It was past nine of the clock, he said, when the prisoner came along, "rolling about like a Jack-in-the-green," whistling and staggering with a basket on each arm.

Mr. Charles Rockett alleged that he stood out of the way with his Court friend in Mr. Farynor's door, "not to stop the lout nohow," and the prisoner fell up against the other gentleman, "and along he goes rowling down the passage and knocks Mr. Farynor's foreman with his baskets and then they started jawing."

"You mean a dispute got up?"

"That's it, your worship. Mr. Farynor's foreman told the prisoner he had no business to come at that hour—a lazy lout loitering at the taverns and unsteady on his two pins."

Luke Furrow was regarding him with an astounded stare. A few moments more and he was going to say to the magistrate, "Sir," or "Your worship," or whatever was the right thing to call him, "that's all confounded lies and his real name is not Charles Rockett."

Rodge went on with his story. "The prisoner kept shaking his fist nigh Mr. Farynor's nose. Mr. Farynor's foreman I mean. 'Maybe I'll give you a surprise,' says he; 'you will see London laid waste,' or no, now I remember it right on my Bible oath—s-elp me, I do. 'I'll give you a surprise—What he said was, I know how to lay London waste.'"

At this there was a great sensation all over the magistrate's room, in fact the clerk had to call for silence. Luke Furrow, with the jailer's grip still on his arm, stared at Rodge in horror and reproach; but the fine personage, in plum-colour and silver, drew back without meeting his eye.

Then up stepped Farynor's foreman and swore this young man said, "I'll give you a surprise—I know how to lay London waste." And the baker, who had been working that Saturday night at the ovens, said he remembered the prisoner right well, and he came late into the bakery and said this place would burn up with such a fire as the Thames could not put out.

Great sensation again. The back of the Justice's office became riotous. "Silence!" from the clerk.

"Who saw the oven fires out that night?"

"I saw them out myself, yer wusshup," said the baker. "I went in at ten of the clock to draw the ovens and took out the last batch of bread. And I looked in again when I came back from the Fox and

Crow at twelve of the clock. I was very careful of the candle, sir."

"You didn't drop a spark?"

"Not I, sir; but what I think happened—yer wusshup, I mean—was that he put down the spark and it went on smouldering."

At this the magistrate was ferociously roused. They didn't want his opinion of what happened. "One question, baker, and I've done with you. Did he say anything about laying London waste?"

"He might have done, yer wusshup; and when I came with the rolls, he was fumbling among the bavins—that's the fuel—"

"Stand back. You prate too much." But all the officials gathered behind the prisoner were astir now, condemning the criminal and the atrocity. The monster of wickedness had an honest, rather boyish face; that was the cunning of him. He would be young for hanging; but there had been younger than that strung up often enough at Tyburn, and only for thefts. This fellow had burned down London. It was promise of a roaring day from Newgate to Tyburn gallows.

As for the prisoner, his tongue touched his dry lips and he asked if he might speak now. He only wanted to deny all this—every bit of it. His denial went for nothing. The magistrate was looking uncommonly grave. Just then a note was passed in from the door. It had come an hour ago and was being held back by the magistrate's serving-man till the morning's cases were disposed of. But now an urgent messenger was asking if the note had been delivered and where was the answer. So before committing the

prisoner to trial, the Justice of the Peace stopped to read those few lines. He knitted his brows. This altered matters.

"There is a counsel who offers to assist you," he said. "Frankly, I don't think it will be of much use, but I am bound to put off your case for . . . let us say, two days." Then he called out "Next case!" and Luke Furrow found himself being hurried out of the house into the midst of the crowd that yelled as if they would like to tear him to pieces. A strong guard took him alive to Newgate.

CHAPTER X.

LUKE CHANGES HIS LODGING

RICHARD LANGHORNE, barrister of the Inner Temple, was conferring with a starved and battered-looking prisoner in an upper passage of Newgate, outside the men's ward. Captain Richardson, the Keeper, as a friend of Mr. Langhorne, had arranged the interview, without bringing Number Ninety-seven too far out of the ward.

One part of the talk sank to very low tones. They both leant on the stone-work in the bay of the window. From Luke: "I've told you what happened at the Silver Cup, sir, but don't let that come out. I wouldn't have him lose his life."

Then Langhorne smiled from lips and eyes. "Well, let us get to the next point. Come on, my dear boy! Now what about that Saturday night? It is a fact you went to Farynor's, is it?"

"Oh yes sir, I was there right enough."

Richard Langhorne, who happened to know the magistrate, had found access to the notes of the case already. "And were you, as the other man said, the last in the bakehouse?"

"It was after nine of the clock, sir, for we had no bread for Sunday. Mr. Reuben Buckle's daughter forgot it, with trying to finish her tabby-gown."

"I am afraid," said the lawyer with the flicker of a smile, "the tabby-gown is what we call irrelevant. What I want to come to is this. What was it—*exactly*—that you said at Farynor's?"

"Oh, not what they swore, sir."

"Of course not. I myself, personally, am quite sure you did not say anything about laying London waste, just as I am myself personally quite sure you did not put a spark down. Of course not. But we have to prove our case. Now what *did* you say, when the foreman told you you were late?"

Luke Furrow remembered well enough. "I was surprised to find nine of the clock late, sir, here in London. 'You see,' I said, 'I don't know London ways.'"

The lawyer almost jumped. "Oh, that's it," he cut in sharply, radiant with triumph, 'You were surprised and you didn't know London ways.' A very different thing from 'You'll get a surprise. I know how to lay London waste.' They have made up their tale; they came here to swear alike. Now what did you say in the bakehouse?"

Luke answered that he believed he *had* said something about fire, and he only wished he hadn't, but there were the ovens and the faggots and the bacon hanging up. "I might have said 'the Thames wouldn't put it out'—I don't know, sir."

"Good," said the lawyer, to his great surprise. "Your mention of fire proves you went there for no such purpose. Do they expect anyone to believe a boy or a man—any human being with a head on his shoulders—is going to put down a spark and set a place on fire, and draw attention to it by making a

remark like that? The baker's talk goes for nothing."

Then he asked Luke where he was working; and hearing that the new apprentice had only arrived at the silversmith's in Prince's Street, he enquired if Mr. Miles Prance would speak for him.

"Mr. Prance is so nervous. I'm afraid he won't, sir. But I brought him a letter from Squire Pennifer—he's the Squire at the Manor House, and if only we could get that letter—the Squire said I was entirely to be trusted."

"Oh come, that's grand! I know the Pennifers," said the lawyer triumphantly. "I am sure the Squire spoke up for you when he sent you to Miles Prance. And now, about that man Rockett who you tell me is really something of a notorious black sheep."

"He is Simon Rodge, sir, and I do believe he always hates me, since we scuffled as boys and he was the one that rolled into the puddle. You won't let out about that gold tankard, sir—they got it back again; I don't want to hang poor Rodge."

"He wants to hang *you*," said Langhorne.

"Oh never mind, sir. I won't let him do that."

The lawyer nodded a few times slowly, while his eyes read the face of this country boy. Then rousing himself, he asked a few brisk questions. "What was Rodge, or Rockett, doing that night at Farynor's? Was he with a gentleman of the Court?"

"He was sitting on the pavement, sir, in the archway with another fellow playing pitch-and-toss. But he was not dressed like that."

Mr. Langhorne fairly laughed out. "Not likely!" And he shook the sad youth by the arm. "He is a

discoverer, my boy; that's what they call the trade. He has bought his gilt buttons and his plum-colour coat with the pay for our troubles. We shall hint that. I may also ask him in examination if the Court acquaintance was the other gentleman sitting on the pavement with him playing pitch-and-toss."

Luke had to laugh too.

"It's a money-making trade to be a discoverer," said the lawyer. "The more crimes and plots, the more plum-colour and gilt buttons. What's his word worth? Nothing! So let us cheer up, lad, and put away all fear."

Without waiting to be thanked, he turned with a wave of his hand and was gone, leaving behind him that mysterious influx of a new courage and joy. And then, one of the jail officials, advanced from a remote corner, unlocked a heavy door and thrust Luke into the men's ward.

That part of Newgate prison had been built by no other than Richard Whittington—the famous "Dick"—and when he was Lord Mayor of London. It had tremendously thick walls and arched roof of stone, and it was old even in the seventeenth century. For many years after the Great Fire and even after the attempt to burn Newgate in the Lord George Gordon Riots, those ancient stone parts of the building were still to stand—only demolished in modern times. Luke Furrow had two days of torment in that pandemonium. The atmosphere was suffocating, and the noise was worse than the foul air. The men were all herded together, the convicted and the untried—the violent and the broken-hearted—undergoing long sentence,

clothed in filth and rags. Fed scantily on rancid or repulsive food, they had no mental or manual occupation whatever, to divert the mind from present misery. The charity basket came once a day, and they besieged it like starved animals. Luke found a special basket was sent in from his benefactor containing wine and meat, bread and fruit. Most likely the flagon and the food had paid toll on the way; but it was not in his heart to keep for himself even the part of the basketful the turnkey brought. He made a distribution to the prisoners that looked most pitiable, and dined sparsely himself on a roll of bread and an orange. On one subject he gave no information. The men were all wanting news, but no question could press from him the nature of the charge which brought him in. Many of those Newgate prisoners had been there through the panic of the Fire. For four days and nights the smoke came in through the barred holes high up in the walls. They heard that the Sessions House had caught alight, and that its woodwork was burning away, and the roof and panelling of the Keeper's house was all ablaze. During four days and nights they were frantic with fear, dreading the worst with no hope of getting out. They were safe behind stone, but it was a maddening ordeal. After that, no crime that a man could have been charged with was so horrible to the mind of the Newgate prisoner as the crime of setting fire to London.

Thirst was worse to Luke than hunger. There were pails of stale water redolent of their last filling with hop-ale. And yet he could not always keep even one orange. There might be some poor prisoner lying by

the hearth-stone, shaking with ague or fever. Once when he was giving a split orange to such a man, a vile-looking jail-bird came and knelt down by the sufferer and took off his own coat to spread it for extra warmth. The action touched Luke to the heart. Even amid the horrors of old Newgate the lowest human dregs contained some redeeming dust of gold.

In those days everyone had belief in God and in the future Judgment. That much of the Faith remained. Agnosticism and materialism had not yet come to blot out hope. There was not one that was going to be "worked off the ladder" at cruel Tyburn, but in his heart he had some knowledge of the just Judge; and the proof of Catholic doctrine lingering in altered form, was the absolutely universal belief that the dying criminal, if he was to hope for mercy, should make true confession of his crime.

Luke came across lapsed brethren in the crowd—one here, one there, who had long ago lost touch with priest or Mass-house. A wreck of a boy, sixteen perhaps, ragged, with hungry ignorant eyes, put a hand on Luke's coat and said wistfully, "You're a priest yourself, sir—yes, you are!—I'll tell no one, if you'll tell me."

It was the saddest moment of Luke's life. "Oh, my God!" he said to himself, tears of pain starting to his eyes, "why didn't I hold on and go to Douay?"

He caught both wrists of the wild-haired boy—bony, consumptive, verminous, a slip of humanity more ignorant than criminal. He drew the lad close to him and told all he could tell of the revelation of

Divine mercy. They prayed together, as Luke had prayed at the death-bed of Reuben Buckle.

"I'll try to look after you, lad," he said at the end. "Do you know Prince's Street, Drury Lane? I'll be at Mr. Miles Prance's, the silversmith's. Ask for me, when you get out."

The answer froze Luke's blood. "I'm not to get out, sir. There was a lot of us and they caught *me*. I'm for Tyburn."

The next day he was nowhere among the crowd.

That was the day when Luke appeared again at the magistrate's house, after a rough transit through the streets escorted by a formidable guard with halberds. Mr. Richard Langhorne spoke a few informal words to the presiding justice, saying that no subject of his Majesty should be accused on a grave charge and left undefended, and before sending a case to the judge and jury, it was well to look at both sides as well as at the character of those who gave evidence. Before half-an-hour the crowd outside were passing round the word: "Case dismissed!" and in more vulgar parlance, "They lagged him for nothing! He's coming out!"

Luke was told by the magistrate that he might find it more pleasant to make his exit by a side door into another street. Out in the open air and free, he looked round, longing to thank his benefactor. A hand was on his arm and his friend was with him.

"Ask Mr. Prance to let you go to the country and have a rest," Mr. Langhorne said, "you have been very hardly tried—this happening to you. Goodbye, lad, I am as glad as you are!" He clasped Luke's

hand, and into the hand a packet of money was pressed. "Take it—you may want it." And the moment after, that friend above all friends was gone.

A little later Luke Furrow arrived at the silversmith's door in Prince's Street—a grimy, battered, unkempt young man, with lank cheeks and a bruise on one side of his forehead. The respectable Mr. Miles Prance opened the door cautiously, after an enquiry as to who was there. He hardly recognised his missing apprentice.

"You might have put yourself in decent order," he said, "instead of coming straight from prison. So you've got off, have you? Such a shock to one's nerves! Really the whole affair was most dangerous." Mr. Miles Prance drew back, and half shut the door. "Perhaps you had better not come in, Furrow," he said, with hesitation. "At least—I don't know—but I think not. You can easily get another job, can't you? I remember what the Squire said in that letter, and I can give you a character. You see, you might bring us jail fever, and I've always heard"—he added this with a shrug of his whole body—"the prisons are alive—crawling! I have my wife and child in the country and they'll soon be coming back. I'm afraid I can't think of having you in, Furrow."

It was cruel. Why was the man so timid—so hopelessly frightened? Luke felt astonished and a little irritated.

"All right, sir," he said. "I would be sorry to endanger anybody. Shall I come in just for my bundle?"

The silversmith shuddered. "No, no. You really may have infection about you. All prisons breed fever.

If I close the door, you won't mind waiting for a moment? The housekeeper will pass your bundle out to you." Luke answered not a word, but went a step farther off into the street. Mr. Miles Prance offered him two of the new gold guineas when the bundle was being dumped on the stones. "Take this," he said, "another thing is, your affair will be talked of; and if I was to keep you, it might be against my trade. One can't risk things when there's a wife and child."

He had a strained and torn expression on his unhealthy face—weak, spiritless, pitiable!

Luke gently pushed the money away. "Never mind, sir! I don't want it. I have a little to go on with. Don't you be sorry about me. I'll manage someway, sir. I wouldn't come into the house and do you harm." So Luke Furrow went off, with his bundle on his shoulder. Perhaps Miles Prance became troubled by self-reproach, for a voice called after Luke; but the rejected 'prentice only waved a hand and shouted goodbye.

The man, he thought of going to now, was Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey, whom he always remembered as approachable and just. So he tramped off to Harts-horn Lane, and arrived at the timber yard when the autumn day was closing.

Luke waited in a panelled room and presently a deep voice called along the passage, "Bring in the candles, Moor." And with the candles, in came Sir Edmund.

Luke had almost missed him, for he was off to settle the affairs of St. Martin's parish vestry; and he was

ready with his broad hat on and his outdoor cloak thrown loosely back from his shoulders. Luke noticed how grand the new knight looked, but also how gloomy. He was in "solemn black"; against it shone the silver hilt of the rapier he wore for dress. The iron-grey curls of the Stuart wig fell in heavy heaps at each side of his chest and the collar of richly wrought lace between them lay flat like a breastplate. His heavy eyebrows, straight and black, his mournful eyes and the deep lines of his face, all gave him a sombre expression, to which the prominence of the thin, aquiline nose added a certain oddity. His gauntleted gloves were in his hand and he was heavily booted to the knee. The upshot of their talk was that he was highly indignant at Luke's arrest and insisted on hearing a few words about the evidence.

"They are putting a price on perjury with those discoverers—spawning lies—" Godfrey said, striding about in anger. "It's neither English nor honest. A Papist may starve with his creed against him, but he can make a fat living if he goes and spies out a Mass-house."

"We shall survive it all, sir," said Luke gently, the candlelight glistening in his eyes, as he turned straight to Sir Edmund.

"And who's been knocking you about, boy? You've a bump on your forehead."

"There was a rough crowd in the street, sir."

"So they heard some fellows swear and after all had to let you go," the magistrate commented. "When will they see that this damnable system breeds perjury?— Some of those informing fellows would swear

through a two-inch board." His strong feeling kept him striding about, raising his voice with indignation. "You Papists are worshipping as you think right; and they believe every trumped-up story and hunt you like rats. Whose side is the crime on then? For myself, I would scorn the man that defamed any body of Christians; those men that 'discover' would swear anything for money."

All at once he remembered that the starved looking youth had said with his first word that he came in search of work. After seeing him write a few lines in a gracefully even hand and after a few questions about his education, he told Furrow he was not for the timber yard—"That would be using fine steel instead of rough tools. I doubt if you are even for the silver-smith's trade. You should be a clerk. If I had not my man Moor to help me here, I would ask you to serve me." He had briefly heard Luke's history by this time. "Now, my man Moor is bringing supper," he said, "and then make your way back to Squire Pen-nifer and to your own people. The Squire can find use for you, and tell him from me you ought to be clerk in a lawyer's office. Do you want money, lad?" He pulled a handful of coins out of his pocket.

Luke thankfully accepted the supper and the advice; but he had money enough and would take no more.

And so it happened that Luke Furrow drifted back to Sussex again, and after two days' jolting in a cart, crossed the farm-yard at nightfall with his long bundle shouldered. Firelight was glowing from the broad window of the big kitchen. He saw Meg in

there with her gown tucked up, sweeping the ashes of the hearth, with the light shining on her face; and his mother was setting out the platters on the supper-table.

Both women ran to him with a cry of joy; and though he made light of being clapped into prison, the whole story came out. Meg's blue eyes smiled up to him, with tears on their dark lashes. He had suffered; he had become her hero. And to think anyone could have imagined their own dear Luke went and burned down London! Round the evening fire that night there was a good deal of indignation against Mr. Miles Prance, the silversmith.

"Well honestly, I can't understand Mr. Prance," Luke said. "That very first night he was talking to the lodger about some that found it in their conscience to conform and some did not. As if anyone could find it in his conscience to give up the Vicar of Christ and take doctrines from the muddle-headed Parliament. Then he wouldn't let me speak. When I began saying what wicked rumors against us were being spread, I don't think that lodger knew he was a Catholic. I wonder what becomes of men like poor Prance when times are hard."

The grandfather shook his white locks and spoke softly and reproachfully from his chimney-corner. "I dunno, but let not you nor me judge anyone, son Luke."

"Indeed I oughtn't say anything about that man," Luke admitted. "He was frightened. He offered me gold—two gold guineas; and that was good of him."

"What I say is, the Lord keep us all!" said the old

man from his corner. "I've heard of the racking in my father's time. I dunno if they woant give us all a jerk and a turn of the rack, one of these days. See if they doant! Not one by one in the Tower of London. They'll fix up the law that it can rack us all together. The old laws are all there, if they start turning the winch. See if they doant—them that lives to it!"

Next morning a horse was sent over from the Manor House for Meg. She had a permanent loan of Mrs. Pennifer's handsome riding-cloak. And when Luke had given her a hand to mount in the paved yard, he himself sprang to the saddle of the sturdy old farm horse, and, the Squire's man riding after them at a distance, they set off over the frosty roads. Luke was none the worse for his troubles, a little thinner in the cheeks, looking more like a keen-souled Florentine youth that morning than a Sussex yeoman. They slackened speed after a canter on the grass at the side of the road, and Meg began to chatter. "We might have ridden pillion; we must try some day. They have a pillion saddle at the Manor House."

"I'd rather ride like this and see you, Meg; and my lady's mare couldn't carry us both."

"Oh, but it must be fun riding pillion! We could go on that fat cob." What a child she was! he thought—and loved her for her impulsive prattle.

"People that ride pillion can't talk, Meg, and I want to talk to you. I have something to ask—*some* day I must ask it."

She seemed at once to have a young maid's instinct, and to guess, and to fence off the question.

"You know the Squire's little daughter," she said, "Miss Agatha. She is going across the sea to be taught by the nuns in Brussels. The Benedictine nuns. That's where Mrs. Pennifer was herself when she was a girl. They say all the Catholics have to send their children across the sea."

"It's hard," said Luke, "when all the schools were ours once. We founded Oxford and Cambridge, and Winchester, and Our Lady's College at Eton. Mr. Arbor used to tell me about it. And now, we have no colleges in our own country and our convents are all broken up too. They want the rich people's sons to take the State religion or be ignorant."

After a pause, both ambling along rapturously—"How lovely it must be to be a nun!" said Meg, a little mischievously, glancing at him from under the hood with the corner of her blue eyes. Luke almost gasped for breath. It had never occurred to him that Meg might not have the same views of life as his own.

"Don't look so frightened, Luke," she said. "Mrs. Pennifer tells Agatha it's not a vocation, if one just thinks it lovely. And that's true. There are so many things I have thought it would be nice to be. Do you remember I used to wish to be a milkmaid, dancing after the fiddler on May Day? Oh!—the dear old times! . . . If only Daddy had not died! . . . and yet? . . . it was so much better, wasn't it?—so much happier for him. I can't wish him back."

"I am sure we should not," said Luke. They rode a little while in silence, and then he said suddenly, "I believe, Meg, you have a vocation to make somebody's home happy."

The girl seemed not to hear. "Mind, Luke, where your horse is stepping," she called to him. And it was true that the horse was near the edge of the ditch, and the frost was white, and the hoofs might slip.

"Couldn't you think about making *me* happy, Meg?"

"What!" she said provokingly. "Instead of thinking of the horse? You wouldn't have me talk to you and let poor Dobbin down?"

Luke stretched a hand to hold the strap of her bridle. "I wonder have you ever thought, Meg, that some day you will marry."

"I often thought I wouldn't," she said frankly, and then broke into sudden laughter. "Oh, that gander!—Cousin Bob! I never detested anybody so much. The Lord forgive me! I told Uncle Samuel I hated big wigs and scent for the rest of my life, and I was never going to marry anyone."

"But I have no scent and no big wig; and my dear, dear Meg, I'm very fond of you."

"Don't talk to me, Luke!" she said, slightly turning away the face and the hood, "I don't want to think about it. I am going to stay with your mother always. She is my mother too; she lets me call her so, and she took me in when I had no one. I couldn't go away from her to any man—not without breaking my heart to think she was wanting me. And I can lighten her work with many a hand's turn. When I work for Mrs. Pennifer with my needle I buy lovely presents for her from the pedlar. And you should see us when we sit together, and I talk my silly nonsense and make her laugh. Don't let us ever talk of marrying. I want to

stay with her, Luke. Come now for a gallop, you can see the gates."

Away went the horses; but for Luke the brightness was gone out of the morning. Meg Buckle was a jewel, a pearl of price. But Luke's heart sank to think that the love he wanted had not touched her. There was no sign of the affection that brings the bride away from father and mother.

"Don't be sorry!" she said, looking merrily back.

"But I loved you, Meg."

"Well, you shouldn't love such a little goose as I am. You shouldn't think about it for years and years." She drew rein, to ride beside him again slowly. "Oh! do you remember how we used to sing 'Gaze Not on Swans'? And that dear daddy of mine, beating time with a long spoon!"

It was all over. The man behind them on the old charger, trotted up and swung himself from the saddle to open the gate of the avenue.

That day Squire Pennifer heard of Luke's misfortune and declaring he himself felt the affront from Prance, he took the lad for awhile into his own service to do accounts and to help the farm bailiff. That was how in a short time, Luke was able to send a sealed packet to a London address in Middle Temple Lane. He did not know how much that simple letter had to do with his future fortunes.

"Honoured Sir," it said, "I have saved up this sum as soon as I could, and will you please accept it and make me happy. Hearty thanks for the money. As to my great debt, that must remain for ever unpaid.

I pray Heaven to recompense you instead right royally—and willingly I remain always in your debt. Your respectful servant,

Luke Furrow."

The lawyer put that letter away in his desk in a secret drawer, that held a few old love-letters from the woman he married and the first quaint scribblings of the children he loved.

In the summer of 1667, Mr. Richard Langhorne himself had a brief experience of prison. The random evidence trumped up against him was slight and he was comfortably lodged with some regard for his position. He, too, had been accused of complicity in causing the Great Fire of London, and the traitor was his own confidential clerk. So there was a vacancy in the office; and to his unspeakable delight, Luke Furrow was sent for to take the position left empty by the faithless clerk. Luke left Burford amid the congratulations of his friends. Not all his hopes were doomed to failure. There is no one to whom, at one time or other, some incredible desire does not blossom out into fruition.

Mr. Richard Langhorne's law chambers were on the first floor in one of the houses that still make up a row of substantial brick buildings in Middle Temple Lane. There the Fire had stopped short. The rooms were approached by narrow oaken staircases. In the front office were shelves of legal books and the desk which was to be presided over by Luke; and the back room was furnished as a private office or study. Its oak presses contained a vast assortment of parchment

rolls and records of cases. On shelves near the window were his favourite books, their leather backs bright with colour and gold. The few chairs were of carved oak; and there was no desk. Both rooms opened upon the landing, not with opposite doors, but entirely separated, one behind the other. These few facts, especially on the impossibility of seeing from one room to the other, were important afterwards at a time of tremendous issues.

Luke's service was rewarded with a growing friendship, familiar and yet dignified. By chance words, trifles almost imperceptible, there was something revealed of the Richard Langhorne the world did not know. The busiest of men in daily life, the London lawyer hid behind his profession the soul of a saint. Zeal for Christ's cause consumed him. He had written a book of "Considerations" upon the King's promise to revoke the Penal Laws, its argument for religious freedom meant as a strong lever to lift their burdens from Catholics and Nonconformists alike. In that book lay his hope of legalizing the Mass-houses. "If anything happens, to cut short my course," he said, "when my son Richard grows up, he must look after the printing of my book. If we can only make His Majesty keep his promise, the Mass is legal."

He had a great name for loving justice. The Quakers came to consult him, knowing he would have no man's conscience fettered by law. Sir William Penn, more than once mounted the oaken stair and was shown into the private office. His clients did not know that all his principles shone out from the ardour with which he loved the Divine Master and laboured

for His causé. Luke began to perceive now what the mysterious attraction meant. This man would not stop short of any sacrifice; and generosity was carrying with it the gift of joy.

Sometimes, to the unutterable delight of the confidential clerk, there came up the stairs, slowly and with the help of the oak bannister, his friend, "Mr. White." Luke knew his real name now—Father Whitebread, the Provincial of the Society of Jesus. When that venerable figure descended the staircases again, Luke had the honour of giving him a supporting arm.

"God Almighty bless you!" the priest would say, as they parted at the corner of the Strand. And then, the stooping gentleman went slowly on his way, with the big worn coat, the broad old hat, the useless rapier—mingling with the crowd, nothing revealing his sacred character, except that recollection which no disguise could hide.

CHAPTER XI.

LONG AFTER

THE summer of sixteen-hundred and seventy-eight. Time had gone swiftly—as it always does; and it was eleven years after.

Luke Furrow—not so slightly-built now, a little bit older but still with the thick brown hair and the honest face and frank eyes—looked out from the window above a coach-house door in a lane of stables off Fleet Street. That one room over the coach-house was the whole of his town residence, though Mr. Richard Langhorne paid him well. There was always the old home down in Sussex to be thought about. One time they could not meet the fines there. Another time the rain was coming in, and the roof had to be mended. Then the crops were bad, and the little that remained of Bush Farm had to be stocked. Then it was all mortgaged, and there was no money to meet the interest. In fact the fines were so heavy, that people couldn't live. If they did not want to sink down to be labourers, the easy way was to attend the Communion Service at least once a year at the parish church. The Furrows did not take the easy way. The three brothers had made a long struggle for Bush Farm, but it had to go. The final message had come that morning by the slow post. The mother was at

the Manor House—dying. Squire Pennifer, though his own losses had been great, was undertaking to send the survivors of the family across the sea to Flanders, where they could make a better living—John and Michael, and John's wife and the children. The grandfather had passed some years ago to the reward of his fidelity. It was well he had not lived to go out of Bush Farm with the Furrows.

Luke looked from the open window to see what the weather was, and if he would roll his cloak or put it round him. His hired horse was outside, stamping an impatient hoof on the stones. His generous master had given him leave at once to go, and thrust money into his hand. "There—don't refuse! It is a favour to me to let me provide; give me that pleasure. Stay as long as you will, Furrow, and you may want more than is in your purse."

And now all was ready to make a start on his journey. He cast a glance round the slant-roofed room. Scant furniture, a bed and a bookshelf, and a clean-scrubbed floor. He turned the key in the door, and went down from the wooden balcony by the ladder. He had impoverished himself, but things had gone from bad to worse at home. He had even denied himself the joy of going for a holiday to the old house. And now it was too late; he was riding off—not to Bush Farm but to the Manor House—in the tension of grief.

London was rebuilt by this time. The new streets seemed wonderfully wide. The houses were rather uniform and ugly, built of brick, sometimes plastered white to pretend to be of stone. There were many

other riders. Hackney carriages went by, with two horses harnessed, or four. Twice he passed a glass coach and six. If it had been a few hours later, he would have had to make way for many sedan-chairs—those covered-in seats hung on poles and gilded and painted, in which two bearers carried a fine lady or gentleman to some evening assembly.

Rain was beginning to fall, when, late on the second day of his journey, he turned down a rutted lane overhung by elms. The quickest way now to the Manor House would take him past the old home.

With almost a shock of recognition, he saw the trees of Bush Farm, and the uneven roofs, crooked, mossy, sunken. It all looked so much smaller than he expected to see it! Well, he had come from a great city and he had been away a long time. A few moments, and he was in front of the old place—the wreck of his boyhood's home.

Here was the farm yard, a scattering of hens picking about on the stones, the empty byres to the left filled up with a broken cart and rough brambles for firewood. At the other side, the forsaken dairy and the sheds—shanties, with here a shattered window and there a door hanging off its hinges. The long, low, plastered house was all discoloured and weather-stained between the timbering: the diamond-paned casements half boarded up to cover breakage: the red-tiled roof sagged at one end, and at the other broken by some recent storm, showing rafters bare against the sky. The old farmhouse door stood open like an upright oblong of darkness. A drizzling rain was falling. He had pulled bridle at the gate, and sat

on his horse, staring at poor old Bush Farm, paralysed by the desolation of the place.

Memory pictures surged into his mind—the gay farewells at that doorway—his grandfather with long white hair, his dear brave mother smiling to him, Meg saying with loving boastfulness. “I’m going to take care of her, Luke!” He thought of the fireside within—long, long ago: thought of the night the stranger came who was the homeless King. And farther back his memory went to that mysterious visit when an altar was made ready, and the people crowded in before dawn, and the Host and Chalice were lifted—even in their own home. A question crossed his mind. Did his Majesty at Whitehall remember the houses that sheltered him in his flight, or did he forget?— But their Lord would remember, when they sheltered Him. Luke thought of that, biting his lip, for the tears of a man were starting into his burning eyes.

Here was the old house now, tottering to decay. They had left everything go rather than be false to Him. *He* would not forget the Furrows.

Courage sprang up with the thought. He slipped from his horse, pushed open the gate, and led the animal in at bridle’s length. He went close up to the home that stood ruined for the Faith of their Fathers.

His people had kept out of prison, but the paying of the fines meant *this*. They were only one family of hundreds that had gone down rather than sacrifice conscience and the Faith. The London prisons were full of great Catholic names now—the Counter and the Marshalsea. He knew it; everyone knew it. They couldn’t pay, and they wouldn’t conform; and they

went to prison. Sometimes in the case of notable persons they had more or less comfortable quarters, but they were still locked into jail, and had to pay for sufficient food; sometimes they were sent to the horrors of the common wards.

Out of the doorway of the farmhouse now ran three little children bare-footed. Those were John's children. They did not remember Uncle Luke; they answered his smiles by drawing back shyly. A young woman, who had been scrubbing the stone-paved kitchen within, came into sight beyond the door, but she still kept half-hidden in the darkness of the house. Her face was white. Her hair, tied out of the way on top of her head, had begun to tumble about her forehead and round her haggard cheeks. She looked, in fact, a smeared and slatternly creature, hungry, red-handed, hard-worked. Her blinking swollen eyes could scarcely open. She had evidently made the children clean and in order, and was now scouring the kitchen of the old house; it was probably as neglected inside as out. Some helpful neighbour! A good thing they had one! It was not John's wife, for Joan was tall, a strapping country wench. This neighbour was rather a little woman, and for build a mere weed. She was horribly tired and untidy—in a deplorable mess. He felt sorry for coming in upon her. Where was John's wife?

"Who's here? Where's the mother of these?" he asked vaguely. "I suppose my brothers are out?" He would only stop a minute, and then go full-speed to the Manor House.

"I am Meg!" The tired little woman came into

the light, rather piteously wondering that he did not know her. She was wiping her wet hands in a dirty apron.

"You—Meg? I never thought you were here. *Is it hopeless? How is she?*"

"Oh! Luke, I was of no use there any more, because— Mother is better, Luke." Then she looked straight at him, with her eyes half shut with weeping; and her tired face tried to smile. "She is gone to Heaven."

The next moment she began to shake with sobs, and hid her tears in the old apron. She staggered, fairly worn out. Luke stepped forward, stretched both arms, and caught her to his heart—tears and sobs, dirt, dust and all.

She sobbed herself into peace like a child, with her cheek against his rough coat. If he was late for the Manor House, his place had been well kept; and she told him the Squire had brought the priest, and there was Mass in the room—the first Mass at the house for a long, long time. To Luke that was infinite consolation. The Guest that they sheltered before dawn had come back to be with her on the way.

Meg looked round suddenly. She was full of household cares. She gently disengaged herself. "Let me run, Luke, and take up the milk. It boils over so quickly, and it is for the children."

She hurried across the big flagged kitchen, and Luke tied his bridle to a staple in the doorpost, and followed her. A pot was set on the hearth at the edge of the wood fire. "I came back last night," Meg went on, explaining, "for Joan has a touch of ague or some-

thing feverish; and I made her stay in her bed to-day, and I looked after the children. Somebody has to clean up the place and mother those poor little things."

While she talked, she poured the milk into three bowls, that stood on the table, and thinly smearing honey on the bread, sliced it on a platter.

The bare-footed trio had pattered in, and were treating the visitor to a fine stare from three pairs of bright eyes.

"When I have these fed, I'll run for John and Michael." So Meg said. There was a new relationship between those two. Each knew now, without any telling, how simple and deep was their love for one another.

His hand was tenderly on her arm. "No, indeed, Meg dearest; you'll remain here; you won't go out in the rain."

She went on providing for the children, placing them at the table, pouring milk from a jug to cool the bowls, finding spoons in the table drawer. "Mother was so happy," she said, without looking at him, ashamed of her red eyes. "I was to tell you from her she will think of you all the same and more—and you are to pray for her—and she will watch over you—always—until—"

Her voice broke a little, and she held the bowl near her lips, cooling it, and then poured it again and again from the spoon, and set it on the table, whispering to her "darling" to sit still and take it nicely. "Now," she said, "I can run out and call them, Luke."

"No, Meg—not yet! And I shall go—not you."

She raised her eyes, and looked at him. "Can't I get something for *you*, Luke? You must be so tired."

"Listen," he said, taking her by both hands. "You stayed, Meg, with *her*—my mother and yours—stayed to the last. All those that are here will be going away. Will you come to *me*, Meg?"

A sudden light dawned in the tired eyes, and she looked up at him. "I will, Luke. Wasn't it you I was fond of all the time, and never thought of another?" He drew her into his arms to rest her head against his coat; and he kissed her wet cheek and her forehead with a love full of something akin to reverence. He had claimed and won little Meg at last.

From his brothers Luke heard that the affairs of the Manor House, as well as of Bush Farm, were "shocking bad." Most of the Squire's land had been sold bit by bit. But in spite of his own trouble Squire Pennifer was standing a friend to the Furrows.

Arrived at the Manor House Luke spent a long time kneeling where the white figure lay in the upper room. Sacred candles were burning, scenting the warm air with hot wax. Her own small crucifix lay on the unmoving breast. There was in the quiet atmosphere a sense of peace—and victory. And yet—what a poor life, as the world counts—what a suffering life! How much hard work had worn the thin hands—what a loving homely tale was ended! . . . But had not it all gone to make up the infinite success? . . . What *was* death?—"I will come again, and take you to Myself!" . . .

The familiar words trembled through the depths of Luke's hushed soul. Then a touch came on his shoul-

der. A priest bent over him.—“Squire Pennifer wants you. I can see to the candles now, and I have my Office to say.”

Luke went downstairs, and found supper laid for him, in a plain worn room. He had just finished the meal, when the Squire shuffled in, stooping and aged, shabbily dressed, leaning on a stick. Luke was up, and round the table, in a moment. The Squire slipped his stick to the left side, to grasp Luke’s hand with his right.

“So you are Luke Furrow—grown broader! Be seated. I’ll sit here. Don’t stop your supper, my son.” The word set Luke’s pulses throbbing. It reminded him of Reuben Buckle and the old days at the Silver Cup.

Squire Pennifer had a great heart; and he had gone through that mental racking that is in the endurance of injustice and enforced poverty. Also he had seen the inside of a prison for a resisted fine, though with such easing of hardship as might have been meant for a bribe. He was simple, unceremonious. The haunting sense of class distinctions had well nigh vanished. These two, the Squire and the yeoman, were drawn near together by misfortune. So Mr. Pennifer sat down a little slowly and heavily, for his joints had stiffened in the Counter. Luke stood in front of him, leaning one hand on the table, pouring out his gratitude in any words that came.

“Tut! Nonsense!—if you were in my place and I in yours, Furrow, you would do just the same for me.”

“Indeed I would, sir. But that’s out of the ques-

tion. You will let me pay sometime, sir, for the farm over there in Flanders?"

"No, no, no! It is paid for. A man I know at Bruges bought it for a song. Godfrey got me a nice sum for the trees; 'pon my word, I think he gave me more than the value. The Pennifers are not done yet, my son; keep your money."

"I shall be having some more presently," Luke persisted.

The Squire held up a deprecating hand. "I know what you did with it this long time. You kept nothing for yourself, lad. The true son of her that's gone!" Luke's eyes filled. "Now sit down, my boy—no, you mustn't stand in deference to me, or I shall not be able to talk to you; and there *is* a subject . . . Have you finished your supper?—Yes?—Well, I have a word to say about Margery Buckle."

Luke felt his heart give a sudden throb. His little Meg—his own at last!

The Squire helped himself reflectively to a pinch of snuff from a common old horn box. He touched Luke on the arm with the snuff-box, and smiled at him out of the corner of a shrewd eye. "If there's money coming—and just now you didn't seem to know what to do with it—isn't it time to think about taking a wife?"

"I have thought about it, sir."

"Go on, young man."

"It seems hardly the fitting occasion to talk of that—does it, sir?"

"Tut—nonsense!"

"There's a maid I have thought about—a whole

lifetime it seems to me. I have settled it with Meg Buckle."

"Well done, my boy! You've got a rare prize. Let's have a wedding on Sunday."

Luke started and gazed. He could not believe his ears. "Oh sir—so soon?"

"Why not? We must do unusual things in unusual times. The burial will be on Friday. That happy soul is surely in Heaven—in 'a place of refreshment, light and peace.'" The Squire sighed gently after quoting the familiar words. "Is it not just what she would have wished? What does the psalmist say? —'The saints shall be joyful in their beds.'" He urged practically that the marriage had best take place while the priest was there. Soon he might not be able to venture to the Manor House.

The crowd that straggled in at dawn on Sunday morning had the surprise of a wedding and a nuptial Mass. Agatha Pennifer had searched out in an old oak chest her mother's wedding gown and veil, and with real flowers, Meg looked a festive bride. One day's honeymoon at the Manor House, and then Luke Furrow had to ride off to London, keeping only the memory of her sweet embrace. It was at the door of the old farm-house they parted. She wanted to stay there to help John's wife and to take care of the children, till the exodus of the whole family for the coast and for Flanders.

But somewhere in the future there would be a home. It seemed to Luke as if now at last the blissful and the incredible had happened, and he and Meg were to be everything to each other for all the rest of

the time. And the children!—it was the greatest marvel of all to picture home with the new life in it, the new faces. The children would be the gift of God. The thought opened up happiness without limit. And all at once it flashed upon Luke that *this* was the future towards which he had always reached out. This was going to be Life. Had not he always, since earliest boyhood, the presentiment of something else coming—something better and more splendid, which he was going to live into as time went on.

So he rode over the Sussex Downs and along the forest paths of Surrey's wooded hills—back to Kinston, across the bridge, and in time into London. At the Temple Chambers he met Mr. Langhorne.

"I was too late, sir," he said, speaking of the purpose of his journey. "But it is well with her."

"Gone?" Luke slightly bowed his head. "Ah well," said the barrister, his soul suddenly looking out of his face, "if we only could see it rightly, she has gone to the land of the living."

"That is our comfort, sir." Then Luke paused a moment and the light of a smile dawned upon his face. "I know you take an interest in my affairs, sir. I am going to give you the surprise of your life. The maid of my choice was looking after my mother, all these years. I never saw anything like it. She made herself a drudge for love of my people. . . . What say you, sir?—we had a wedding at Squire Pennifer's. I have married a wife."

"Oh, but that is happy news!" said Langhorne. "But your fair lady has not come to town."

"No, sir, I have still to build her a nest."

CHAPTER XII.

A GLIMPSE OF CHERRY PIE ALLEY

THE Langhorne lived in Shire Lane, not far from Temple Bar. Round the corner in another lane of that outlying suburb near Strand, there were two excellent rooms, large and wainscoted with white panels—a first floor in Cherry Pie Alley. It was Mrs. Langhorne and her little girl, Laetitia that found the nest; and the lawyer himself paid for the furnishing as a surprise present to his faithful servant. Those two enjoyed it, like a boy and girl conspiring over the grand secret of a gift. Then Luke was overwhelmed with delight, and Squire Pennifer's coach was already somewhere on the road, bringing the bride. The clerk at the chambers had to keep his excitement from jerking his duties out of mind. Meg's blue eyes came between him and the law parchment. It was a strain to take down letters, when he kept wondering where that coach was now—and now.

The old-world lodging was as charming as a woman's care could make it. Mrs. Langhorne was like every lady of the time—an accomplished housewife; and when Meg was almost due to arrive, she was in and out all day putting finishing touches. Things should be pretty as well as cosy—one might almost say "mighty fine"—for little Mrs. Furrow.

She looked about her, made exquisitely happy by that lodging in Cherry Pie Alley. Perhaps—perhaps—it was this sort of a heart of hers that made Richard Langhorne in love with Dorothy Legatt long ago. Yes, it had been a rare pleasure to build the nest. She had heard of Luke Furrow's word, and it had touched her. Nowhere to bring the bride to! And how was he to make a home?

Well, now it was ready, and Squire Pennifer's coach was no doubt somewhere about the Hammersmith turnpike gate. Here were well-stored cupboards, a press full of linen sweet with lavender, shelves laden with dainty porcelain as well as good honest Devonshire ware, a clean floor with gay mats, and white panelled walls with a picture here and a mirror there, curtained casements and bright flowers. There was furniture, finely made, that Meg would delight in polishing, a big deep-seated oaken chair, well-cushioned for Luke Furrow to rest in when he came from Middle Temple Lane, while Meg spread the meal with the gayest of table ware or the best of pewter, and the finest of linen.

"It is complete," she said, when the giver of the goods looked in to admire. "Everything is complete, even to a cat and a duster. Yes—really; the good woman downstairs is feeding the cat and marking the dusters with a beautiful embroidered 'F.' So now there is nothing left for them but to be happy ever after!"

"My Dorothy—the whole place shows your taste. But happy ever after! Are any of us that?"

"Oh! but they *must* be," she said with a pretty im-

patience. "My dear Dick, think how long poor Mr. Furrow has waited to have a home at all."

The lawyer had walked over in his gown from the Sessions House. He put a gentle hand on each of the wife's shoulders. His Dorothy wanted to arrange the future as well as the home for those lovers; but that she could not do.

"What would you, sweetheart? We have not yet come to 'happy ever after' in Shire Lane, nor will the Furrows find it in their own nook round the corner, though I love the very name of Cherry Pie Alley. No—though the hangings are mighty grand, and you have put pictures on the wall, I see—and they have French porcelain cups—how charming!—with painted heartsease and gilding too. I hope Furrow will like his book-press that I chose. Four shelves! He cannot have more books than that. And what is the perfume? Lavender? That means a fine stock of linen."

"Mrs. Furrow has a lovely oak press, and a carved dower-chest, Dick; and the four-poster has flowered curtains, and our little Laetitia has embroidered an 'F' on the corner of the pillows." How she seemed to enjoy it—Dorothy who was all heart and energy! "So now," she said, with laughing obstinacy, "we must have the right ending to the fairy tale. When I told tales to the children, it was always 'happy ever after.'"

"Dear heart," he said, looking down into her face, as one might in explaining indulgently a mistake to an impulsive child—"that 'happy ever after' is in Heaven." He had kissed her forehead; it was so hard to disappoint her; but how was it she had been so long in learning? They had loved each other devotedly—

those two—in the comradeship of many years. And it was then there occurred to the wife, for the first time, a startling prescience that something was going to happen. She could not imagine what this was. Anything was possible. She had been too confident of easy times and good fortune.

“There is no bad news, is there?” she said, searching his face, while his embracing hands still rested on her shoulders.

“Oh! nothing, Dorothy; nothing new, sweetheart. Come, let us not be so serious.” And he encouraged her with that sudden and radiant smile of his. “You surely don’t want this world to be the end of the story—*this* sort of a world!”

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MAN WITH A DRAWL.

DOROTHY LANGHORNE was no mere woman of fashion. The constancy of her nature, the purity of her heart untouched by the worldliness of the time, must have been potent charms that attracted a man of Richard Langhorne's temperament.

The Legatts of Essex were Protestants, and their well-known name for a long time removed suspicion from her husband. It is inconceivable that the lover of Dorothy Legatt did not lead her back to the Faith of her forefathers, especially as two of the Langhornes' sons went as boys to Spain in the hope of vocations to the priesthood; and it is noticeable that at the supreme crisis of Richard Langhorne's life there was in all his voluminous writings and in his memoirs not one hint of attempted dissuasion, but on the contrary his wife showed the utmost bravery and devotion. Also it must not be forgotten that conversions, though known to be frequent, were entirely concealed in those days, and Richard Langhorne was the intimate friend of the priests of the Society of Jesus, apostolic men like Father Whitebread and Father Fenwick.

The Langhorne boys were at this time away at college. Both Francis and Charles attained in after years

to the priesthood; one of them, at least, returned to labour in the English mission. The eldest son, Richard, was of an age to be in and out of the Temple chambers, and backwards and forwards between London and Essex, where he was to inherit a small estate. The little girl, who had been given the joyful name, Laetitia, was still a small figure such as we see in the portraits of Stewart children—a rosy face, a demure lace cap pulled round a head of curls, and a gathered frock to the floor frilled at the shoulders with the deep lace of a Court lady. Miniatures of the grown-ups they were; but children after all; and if Richard Langhorne built high hopes upon his three sons, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt the one daughter to whom he had given the joyful name was the darling of his heart. These were the four whom Luke had heard playing somewhere overhead on that first evening in Shire Lane; or possibly the patter and the voices belonged to three, and Mistress Laetitia was in her wooden cradle—a mighty fine one with high rockers and much silken embroidery, and cherub heads with wings carved in the oak of the head-board and the foot.

When Luke Furrow and Meg were living in Cherry Pie Alley Mrs. Langhorne began to ask for Mrs. Furrow's company in a morning round; and so she kept Meg from being lonely, and had someone to carry the bundle or the basket. Two or three days in the week they went out early, and sometimes little Mistress Laetitia came too, hooded, bright-eyed, eager, contending playfully with Meg for the carrying of the basket.

All Catholic families worthy of the name were in

personal touch with the poor. The laws did little and did it badly. The betterment of the condition of the workers was not even talked of. The destruction of the monasteries in the century before had put an end to a vast outpouring of relief, and broken up an established system of labour on the abbey lands. Vagrants were treated with the utmost harshness. The poverty-stricken in the towns existed in a squalor we can hardly imagine. Visiting the sick did not mean in those days the expression of sympathy by clean hospital beds. It meant going into most unsavoury and unsanitary back lanes, plunging into dark cellars, ascending by crazy stairs to tenement rooms reeking with malodorous poverty. The poor were the whole section of the population fallen by the wayside.

Another work in those days was the providing of vestments and altar linen for the hidden Mass-houses.

Our two hooded women had been into a silk mercer's one morning to buy gold embroidery thread, when they were startled by a stranger getting straight in front of them as they came out and swinging off his hat with a bow to Mrs. Langhorne. The man's look was repulsive. He was well dressed in ugly new black, with a shine on the cloth; from a poor man she would never have shrunk. There was something of a clerical style about his cloak and his cambric neck-bands. "Your pawdon, ladies," he drawled, with his broad-leaved, sugar-loaf hat in his hand. "I have a question to awsk—a mawst impawtant question." The drawl was odious—a vulgar affectation of a listlessly elegant speech. There was infinite cunning in his half-shut

black eyes. A sinister man. Both women dreaded him instinctively.

"I have come," he said, "from Spain—from Vawladolid—I know Mawster Chawles and Mawster Fwancis. Where is Mr. White now?" Then with a sudden direct questioning:—"Is he at Mr. Langhorne's?"

"No one is staying with Mr. Langhorne. Sir, do not ask us to stop. We are late already." With great dignity the lady drew back and swept away, Meg clinging terrified to her arm.

"What a strange man!" they said to each other, when they were at safe distance. Both had a pre-science of danger. They took the shortest way to Shire Lane, to warn the servant to answer no questions.

At a street corner there had been a harmless collision. Two coaches locking their wheels. It was all over except the language of the coachman, and one vehicle was moving off through the crowd. The owner of the standing coach was a very stout, red-faced man, with huge grey Stuart wig and gold-laced coat.

"Why, that's our Meg!" screamed his wife, from the carriage window. Her ladyship was gorgeously attired; Cousin Henrietta of the Chelsea house was recognisable, though she looked much older with the lapse of years and her flabby rouged cheeks hung slightly. As for Mr. Samuel, he was "mighty fine," and he had his own glass coach now. He faced round and let an unexemplary oath escape. By all a man of such strict conscience could swear by, it *was* Meg Buckle!

"Samuel, Samuel, keep a guard upon your tongue," said the lady, leaning from the unclosed carriage door,

178 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

and laying a finger on her own mouth, dyed scarlet by some remote ancestor of the modern lip-stick.

Meg made the quaint little curtsy of the period, and then offered her hand to her kinsfolk. "I am Meg Furrow now," she said with a smile. "I am married to Luke."

"Who married you?" thundered the uncle, purple in the face, while the crowd pressed near to listen. "One of those hedge priests? That was no marriage." He called Meg a daughter of Heth and a worshipper of idols; in fact, he called her by such foul names as the poor little woman had never heard before. "A hedge priest! They ought all be hanged! Marriage—that was no better than jumping over a gipsy broomstick!"

"This is no place for us," said the stately Mrs. Langhorne quietly. Then turning to the angry man,— "Mrs. Furrow is a friend of mine. No—do not detain us, sir."

He tried to catch Meg by the arm, but she dodged with a shriek.

"Get into my coach this minute, girl!" he shouted. "Here, jump in! Fly from Sodom and Gomorrah! They're going to get fire and brimstone by law."

Her protectoress, with her usual dignity, turned abruptly away, bringing Meg with her. The coach door banged and they heard it rolling off, Henrietta Buckle firing shrill shots against Popery from the window, while the crowd made way for the equipage, more inclined to laugh than to listen.

The very next day, two men went down to Harts-horn Lane and across the timber yard, to swear before the magistrate their oath to the truth of the "discov-

ery" of which they were already circulating hints through the town.

Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey looked the worse for the passing of the years. The aquiline nose was more marked, more grotesque; the heavy straight eyebrows, still black, were more lowering. But he towered erect and tall, energetic not stooping. The great iron-grey periwig hung in heavily curled masses before each shoulder. His suit was always of solemn black, only ornamented by the square lace collar flat as a breast-plate and the silver-hilted rapier at his side. To his office at the house on the wharf, the man Moor, grown grey in his master's service, ushered in the two visitors, calling out their names:—"Doctor Titus Oates—and Doctor Israel Tonge——"

The "discovery" which they had been concocting for some weeks, consisted of forty-three articles—"awticles," the drawling Titus Oates called them. He began by explaining that he was a doctor of the University of Salamanca. Israel Tonge chimed in and proceeded to expound the document, increasing its awesome effect by gestures of his claw-like hand. Very much older than Oates, he had a lean countenance and something of the aspect of a hawk. His whole occupation was the ferreting out of evidence to prove plots. With the zeal of a fanatic, he looked every inch a prophet of evil. His long ragged beard and scarecrow clothes made it clear that he had lost all thought of such trifles as appearance in the frenzy of accusation.

"A hellish plot," he called this, "for the Murther of His Sacred Majesty the King, the overthrow of the Government and the bloody blotting out of the

Protestant religion by force of arms and by massacre."

It was too big to be true. Sir Edmund pursed his lips doubtfully, drew his brows together, and looked at the clock in the corner.

Titus Oates listened to the rant of Israel Tonge with an air of importance and righteous pride. He assured the magistrate that his "shawking discovery" had already been made known to the King. "A hawwid and damnable plot!"

The magistrate was in an obvious hurry. He had not asked the discoverers to sit down. "I hear any amount of things," he said, "and some of them from men not worth wasting time with. The air is full of plots and it has been for years. Perhaps you don't know how many I am told about. We magistrates hear of plots by Nonconformists, plots by Covenanters, plots by Scotchmen, Irishmen, Papists—everybody! And when they are sifted, everything ends in rumour. Well, gentlemen, if it satisfies you, when you write your signatures, I can witness that you have written them. There my business ends. I am no witness of the facts, you understand—only of your signatures. It is enough for me that the King knows about this matter, whatever it is. You say he does?"

The document was signed. But Israel Tonge would not move to go away. Again he uplifted his voice. "The armies of the wicked will arise and slay us. The sacred person of our King is in peril. Not in one way is he doomed, but he is compassed about in many ways. You could see it all there, Sir Edmund, if you would go through the forty-three articles. He is to

be shot. He is to be poniarded. He is to be poisoned by the Queen's own physician. He is to be set upon by four Irish ruffians. He and his Parliament are to be burned together. This nation must arise as one man against Popery and blot it out. And blessed are they and worthy of all reward, that bring the abominations of Babylon to light, and cast down——"

"My good sir," broke in Sir Edmund, "I have done the business of witnessing your signatures; and now I go out. Moor!—where are you, Moor? Open the door for these gentlemen. No, no!"—indignantly, with a wave of his hand. "I will not take a fee for this traffic. I have no mind to fill my pocket from rumours."

So much for that day's work. But in three weeks the repulsive pair came back again, making their way up the timber yard to the magistrate's house; and by this time they had a document of eighty-one articles instead of forty-three.

Godfrey the magistrate, a staunch Protestant, was a man of just mind and large charity. He was no persecutor; he hated slander. His daily purpose was to give an equal justice to all men of goodwill. His fairness extended to a tacit refusal to interfere with the Mass-houses. As he saw it, the searchers were the evildoers acting against common justice. If a raid took place in his jurisdiction, it was not with his knowledge or wish.

The coming of those ominous men landed him in a dilemma that preyed upon his mind. They did not keep quiet about their deposition. All sorts of gossip reached him. It was said he had concealed the treason, and for "misprison" of treason the penalty

was death. On the other hand, rumour had it that he would be killed for knowing too much, as a warning to other magistrates. He brooded over it all. How could it be concealment of treason when the whole town knew—even the king. And why should he be set upon when witnessing signatures was only a magistrate's ordinary duty?

Then he, with his honest conscience heard that Catholics were being seized in every direction. His trouble of mind increased. He had a brooding habit, and a sad family history. The dread of judicial execution scared him on one side; on the other the persistent rumour that he would be done away with by desperate men. So far, the Popish Plot was in the minds of most sensible citizens only one more bizarre fiction. But there was drawing nearer and nearer a disaster that was to give to the fiction the aspect of a fact.

All London and the whole country was to swing round to the belief that "the Papists" were assassins, and that a general massacre had narrowly been averted. To be a priest, to absolve, to say Mass—this was to be called High Treason again; and all classes of the civilised nation athirst for blood were to clamour for convictions—for the barbarous hanging, drawing and quartering that was the legal penalty. A few days now, and to be a Catholic at all, would mean to stand close to the martyrs in perilous and glorious company.

The storm had hardly broken, when Father Whitebread, alias Mr. White, the Provincial of the Society of Jesus, was arrested on his sick-bed and a guard kept, so that no one could speak to him privately. His

removal was impossible for three months after. At the same time four other Jesuits were seized and taken to prison, as well as Dom Corker, the Benedictine. Titus Oates and his minions had broken into the monastery at the Savoy, evicting the community and seizing their Abbot.

Richard Langhorne went at once to see his client, Father Whitebread. He was flatly refused admission. From one official to another he carried his claim, asked courteously and then argued and stormed for an order to pass the guard. Still he was refused. "But as his legal adviser—a case of common usage, common justice."—— Impossible! he failed everywhere. Something was said about "no more conspiracy."

He came back again to the office at Middle Temple Lane, and strode up and down in burning indignation.

"A sick man! If they dare to take him to prison, it would be his death. It is iniquitous. And they talk of a charge of High Treason against all five Jesuits. It's out of the question. Nothing to support a case against them."

Then answering the horrified Luke, "Yes—five Jesuits. The others are gone to Newgate—and Father Corker. I shall defend those men. There's nothing else being talked of in the town. A monstrous Popish Plot forsooth. But it's a mere money job—a discoverer's fraud. Everybody of any position laughs at it. They have overstepped themselves this time—eighty-one accusations! These curs think Englishmen have no sense. Wait a bit! I shall disgrace the plot-mongers in open Court. Discoverers! It's a regular trade. I'll denounce them—vile characters most of

them, swearing honest men's lives away—for pay!" The word was weighted by a contempt and disgust amounting to loathing. To men like Langhorne and men like Godfrey too—to work iniquity and destroy for money was the lowest depth of blood-guiltiness. "I tell you," he said, "no one worth counting believes it, so it's more annoying than dangerous. One man I met laughed out in my face. He asked me if I had read the charges. Why, His Majesty was to be killed in five or six different ways. The scoundrels that were pumped for evidence did not know each other's stories. So it will be all over soon enough. But what enrages me is that they should annoy a sick man—and the gentlest, the noblest of men."

"Whose doing is it, sir? Who began it?"

"Oh! I have heard about it for some time, and I have taken steps to be ready. There's a rogue by the name of Titus Oates at the bottom of it, and a caricature of the prophet Jeremias, a crack-brained old fanatic that Oates got hold of. They call him Tonge—Israel Tonge. I had information through a Quaker friend that those two were hatching mischief. People know old 'Israel' is crazy on 'discoveries'; but I thought it as well to get a few points about Oates."

"Did you find his record, sir?" Luke stood by the window, nibbling the end of his quill to pieces. Langhorne, with his gown flung back, paced up and down.

"I did find his record, and no Court ought to listen to the man. Expelled from college:—made a Protestant clergyman, and thrown out of his curacy and put in prison for slander—criminal slander:—(you see, he has taken in both sides)—broke loose from prison and

got a naval chaplaincy—and there Mr. Pepys' clerk, of all people, young Atkins from the Navy Office—came to my help, for he could tell me Oates was turned out of the Navy for disgraceful conduct. And then the unhangd villain goes to Spain, and pretends to be converted to Catholicism: wants to be a Jesuit forsooth—and he did get under the roof of the Society of Jesus too, and afterwards swore he went there to be a spy—swore he was a hypocrite! He was at Valladolid, and then he was at St. Omer's; and he got turned out of both. Then he came here to London, and he had the audacity to offer himself to Father Whitebread, our Mr. White. But Father Whitebread wouldn't have him. Oates the spy wanted to be a novice forsooth; but there he failed. Now do you understand the arrest?"

It was all heavy news for Luke Furrow to take home to Meg. The seizure of six priests was open attack, a horrible sacrilege.

Until then, the little lodging at Shire Lane used to be a bright place, the happiest spot on earth, when Luke came back in the evening. Meg was essentially a homemaker. She looked wonderfully like the little Meg that chattered long ago at the Sign of the Silver Cup. This interval of ease and peace had made her young again.

But now with the bad news their life was suddenly over-clouded. This was the first flash and thunder peal from a sky loaded with storm.

What Luke wanted that night was not the inviting meal, but someone to talk to—sympathy. He found comfort in telling Meg his memories of the first meet-

ing with "Mr. White." He knew long ago that mysterious place was the house in Shire Lane. Some of his recollections he could not tell. They had to be thought over silently. That night his Lord had spoken to him and he could neither mistake nor forget. But there were things that Luke could pass on to Meg, and there was comfort in the telling. He remembered "pray that we may not be unworthy of our brethren who suffered greater things." And also: *Quoniam in Me speravit, libera, eum!* But how was *he* to be set free now? All at once it flashed upon Luke that there are some that are delivered through the gates of Death.

One hope there was—that Mr. Langhorne would bring out the real character of the accusers, utterly discredit them, and force the acquittal of the prisoners.

One week after the arrest of the five Jesuits and the Benedictine, Luke Furrow was in the chambers at the Temple, when he heard a lurching step coming up the stairs. Who was this? Not a client. It sounded like a man staggering up in a hurry. It might be a porter with too heavy a load. It could hardly be a pedlar making the mistake of mounting to a lawyer's chambers.

A rough bang for a knock. Without waiting for an answer, the stranger swung open the office door. No pedlar, no man with a load. This was a heavily built beery-looking ruffian, with his hat on, and in his hand a roll of paper.

"Mr. Langhorne here?" he asked, sweeping a glance round the office from bloodshot eyes.

Luke sprang up. Horror seized him. The moment he saw the man, he knew why he was come.

"Sit down a minute," he said. "I'll see if Mr. Langhorne is in."

He wanted to warn his master to slip away. For Luke Furrow knew what this was; instinctively he knew it.

"We don't waste time waiting—not in *our* business." With the gruff answer, the man strode along the landing to the door of the other room, and banged a panel there. "You're wanted, Mr. Langhorne!"

Luke dashed out, and sprang into the back room, past the stranger. He was not going to let his master be taken without resistance. At the moment, he squared his elbows and clenched both fists. Every muscle of his body was tense. No; they would not get Mr. Langhorne—not while *he* was alive. If it came to a fight, he would die first; and that would not matter—not a jot!—if the master had time to get out.

The lawyer was there, standing by the window in his wig and gown. Hearing the door burst in, he turned round with a book in his hand, not losing his composure for a moment. He saw the warrant officer step in, red-faced and powerfully built; and he saw also his faithful clerk spinning past to face the intruder.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WARRANT

I AM the messenger of the Privy Council," said the man, rolling his big bloodshot eyes in the direction of Langhorne, and talking as if he meant to go through a rough duty by main strength. Pulling open the roll of paper in his hand, he showed a warrant signed by four councillors for the arrest of "John Langhorne" on a charge of High Treason.

The lawyer kept perfectly calm, put away the book he had been reading when the intruder appeared, and glanced at the warrant.

"This is no good," he said. "That is not my name."

"That's you right enough, and you know well, sir, you can't dodge the law," growled the man, sullenly. "It's you they want—Langhorne. That's your name, isn't it?"

Luke's eyes appealed desperately to his master for orders. There stood Richard Langhorne in the full light of the window, robed in the barrister's black-caped gown. In those moments of strained excitement, every detail of his grand presence became impressed upon Luke's keenly watchful sight. There grave and fearless were the lips and eyes that had always been so ready to smile encouragement straight

from a gallant soul. The heavy locks of brown hair brightened with a sheen of bronze fell in waves in front of each shoulder, and crowned the broad forehead. The ends of cambric, square beneath his chin, showed off by a patch of white the majestic darkness of the head. Luke saw all these details without putting any of them into words. All he knew was it was the master he loved, the man whose mysterious attraction had made everyday life so sweet. And now he looked as self-possessed as if he were going to plead in Court. There was a striking contrast between that noble figure and the bloated officer of the law, who, truth to tell, looked as if he had spent the night carousing in a cavern.

"This warrant is for the arrest of John Langhorne," said the lawyer. "That, I must ask you to take notice, is not my name." And he held out the paper for the warrant officer to take it back.

The messenger of the Council swore brutally. "You're under arrest, or I'm a Dutchman. No, sir. I've no use for that. That there paper belongs to you. Them that sent me don't want law quibbles. You're the man. Come along o' me!"

Quietly Langhorne deposited the warrant on the small table nearest the burly officer, tossing it sideways, and telling him an arrest would be an illegal act. "Go back to whoever sent you, and tell them that is not my name."

Luke stood looking from one to the other, listening with a beating heart. His master had grasped the situation splendidly. The man would have to go. "And then," thought Luke, "we shall barricade the

office and let them think he is here; and that will gain time; and the master will have slipped away, and young Mr. Richard will get him down to the coast, or to Essex." But the warrant officer was not going so easily.

"You say this here name is wrong," he thundered. "But Langhorne is right any way, 'Tom,' 'Dick,' or 'Harry,' doesn't matter."

"An illegal arrest is an offence against the law," Langhorne warned him. "Take care you yourself don't get into prison, my man. I tell you, it is punishable by law." Langhorne spoke clearly, and held up a warning finger.

The man swore he would take the hazard, and strode forward to clap a hand on Langhorne's shoulder. Quick as lightning, Luke was between them, flinging the hand back, and holding his right fist doubled and his left arm ready for a parry. "Get out of this," he shouted. "Can't you understand, it's illegal—*Illegal*—do you hear! Do you want me to throw you downstairs?"

For a few moments there was pandemonium in that small back room. The burly man's blow could have felled an ox; but Luke had tricks of wrestling and boxing learned at Burford; and if he was not a heavy-weight like the other, he was swift and alert. The language of the Council's messenger was fiery and explosive. A chair crashed. Desk in that study there was none—only the light little table that crashed next, and a few high-backed oak chairs that were sent rocking.

It was Langhorne's voice that stopped the struggle.

Still calm, he was saying something about "my orders," and Luke heard the command, "Keep quiet, if you would serve me."

Breathless, with perspiring face and torn coat, Luke Furrow drew back, quite against his will. The other man mopped his brow, and swore inaudibly. One blow had got in, full upon the fellow's nose, and the more he rubbed his face with a kerchief, the worse his oaths became.

"Now, Furrow," said the master's voice, with a gentle firmness, "I have made my protest, and I am going with this messenger of the Council. He is only doing the work he has been sent here for; but the Governor at Newgate will better understand what I mean by an illegal arrest. I know Captain Richardson, and he will see the point. Re-arrange the study. Anything like violence is a mistake. My good impulsive friend, we must take things quietly. You see I happen to know the law, and the Council's messenger does not."

Luke hurried before them to the staircase. "Oh! master—let me go with you!"

"No, no! I must go alone."

Never had the voice he loved been so firm. Luke had the agony of seeing his friend and benefactor led away down the staircase. The only comfort was that word, "an illegal arrest." "John" was on the warrant, and all the world knew this was Mr. Richard Langhorne. Back in an hour or two—was that what he said? Surely on that warrant the jailer at Newgate could not keep him? They would outwit the hunters. He put the room in order, and pushed the

torn sleeve up against the armhole of his coat. It would not do to be in rage, if a client happened to look in. A tense expression had settled upon his face. A terrible crisis was come. His lips moved fitfully, as he worked about.

Half an hour had gone by. That couldn't be his master's step on the stairs already? No; it was young Mr. Richard—a slim boy taller than Luke. He came in, ashen pale. He had met his father over beyond "Paul's," striding along under arrest with a crowd about him; and the escort would not let them exchange a word.

"My father's papers!" he gasped breathlessly. "The keys of the locked drawers—quick! God knows there was no treason ever here; but those brutes shall not have every professional secret they choose to lay hands on."

"Nay, rather leave the drawers unlocked," said Luke. "Think, Master Richard; if every paper is here that can be asked for, does it not prove better there is nothing to be said against him?"

"You are right, Furrow, let them come and find nothing. The hounds—the vile beasts!" In fact all the language that relieved young Richard's feelings were neither in his father's usual vocabulary nor in Luke's; but they were to be found in the Bible itself, where there is much necessary mention of damnation and of devils. Mr. Richard broke out into saying what he thought of the Privy Council at intervals during the next half-hour. Till the twilight was falling, Langhorne's son and his clerk sat and listened

for the step that never came. At last they locked the door and hurried off straight to Shire Lane.

Luke stood in the panelled hall, where the hanging lamp had just been lighted, and bars of shadow from its iron-work spread round walls and ceiling. How vividly the place brought back that other evening, and "Mr. White," in the room farther down the passage reading his Office, where candle light and firelight shone round the curtains of the four-poster. Oh, for his presence once again—the sound of his voice.

The parlour door jerked open and Mrs. Langhorne hurried out. Her son had broken the news to her. The wife gave the impression of a woman's brave soul rising to meet a desperate emergency. Handsomely dressed, with strings of pearls about her neck, she had been expecting her husband's coming.

"I am going to him," she said, "yes—to Newgate. Mr. Furrow—if you would be so very kind as to find me a coach——?"

"But madam, they cannot keep him. He may be here soon, you may pass him on the way. He said it was illegal—the arrest."

"They do illegal things." The dark eyes and the white face were turned straight to Luke Furrow. "There may be a delay—that's the worst of it. You will get a coach round from the Strand—from the Three Lions." She made her arrangements quickly. Her son was to come with her, Jonson, the man, was to pack a basket with one of the roast chickens, and some cheese and fruit, and a small bottle of sack. She would see Captain Richardson, the Keeper; Mr. Lang-

horne might be detained, but it would be annoying if he had not a good supper in his room. Martha, the maid, was to fetch her cloak.

Luke waited about the street and in and out of the house, till the coach came back. Captain Richardson had sent word that he was engaged. An interview had been refused. Only the basket was passed in and a turnkey said Mr. Langhorne was well lodged.

The intrepid woman had been weeping, but now her eyes were dry. "We shall outwit them," she said. "The Queen shall know of this injustice. She will appeal for me. How *can* they keep him, when the warrant was false?"

Next morning Meg was sent for to accompany Mrs. Langhorne to Somerset House.

"Don't be afraid," she was told. "You will not see the Queen—and there's nothing to fear if you did. I'd rather have you with me—Meg—than anyone else."

It was only a short distance. They turned into Strand, for Shire Lane was off it, near the old Temple Bar which was but a toll-gate. Soon they crossed to old Somerset House on the left, the palace which later gave place to another building. Its walls stretched far along the Strand. Beyond was the Savoy, where the Benedictines had their house; and not far from the Benedictines was the French Embassy Chapel and near the waterside a small property called on old maps "Jesuits' Ground." Katharine of Braganza lived mostly at Somerset House, away from the luxurious revels of Whitehall. It was a question how long the little Catholic colony at the Strand would be

left the right to live, even in the near neighbour of her palace.

The two cloaked and hooded women entered by the broad gateway of the Somerset House quadrangle where sentries in buff leather and broad hats paced about, holding upright steel pikes. Mrs. Langhorne seemed to know a doorway to the left, and there the visitors were admitted by a man in the Queen's livery of dark blue and silver. His whole appearance almost paralysed little Mrs. Furrow; she was doubtful whether he was a lacquey or a lord.

At the end of a passage they were consigned to a boy in the same livery, who led them across innumerable quaint hedged gardens looking on the river, past flower-beds and peacocks, fountains, avenues of trees, till at last they were ushered into an entrance hall, where a door opened to an ante-room. Mrs. Langhorne was to wait there for one of the ladies of the Court, and it was settled that her escort might pass the time in the chapel.

Along a narrow passage, warned of one step up or two steps down, by the servant boy in blue and silver—and Meg found herself in a lofty narrow private chapel built with small transepts to make the form of a cross. The altar was at the end towards the Strand. There was a hanging silver lamp; the semi-circular apse was lined with curtains thick with gold. The walls of the whole chapel were covered with beautiful panellings of the linen pattern. As Meg knelt down, she noticed that only two other people were there, a small grey man with his head on one side, working at dusting the cushions, and on one of

the velvet chairs near the front, a bent little woman in black, apparently another servant or poor retainer at the palace. The bent little woman was near the altar-rails but quite away to the side, as if she did not wish to intrude. She was huddled up with something black over her head, gently rocking, as if she had prayed a long time and was getting tired.

Meg herself had hardly slept the night before; and now as she sat back on a velvet chair more towards the middle of the chapel, her thoughts began to wander. She had pictured to herself the Queen coming here into the palace chapel. Queen Katharine would be in robes like that glittering cloth of gold, pages would hold up her train, and the maids-of-honour would follow. Meg had only just learned, on the way, from Mrs. Langhorne, that a Queen did not wear her crown all day and takes it off to go to bed.

She heard a sigh or a sob. It came from that black bundle of a woman, who was kneeling now supporting her head on one hand. The black bundle was gently shaking—shaking. Poor soul!—she was crying bitterly.

Meg had her housekeeping funds in a long knitted purse in her pocket. She began to wonder if a little money would make the poor bundle feel better. But then—if this was a servant in a palace—she would not be in want.

Suddenly the little woman in black rose up, genuflected, bowing profoundly, and turned to go out. It was a shock to Meg to think what a mistake she was near making. This was a lady with a close-fitting collar of pearls about her neck, curls on her forehead,

beautiful dark eyes fringed with long lashes and an olive skin untouched by paint. The mantilla over her head was of soft silk; and though she was of small build she held herself with great dignity, her black gown trailing on the floor.

The cushion keeper hurried to open the door for her; and when she was gone, there were women's voices outside while the door was closing. Meg was still blessing Fortune that had saved her from a bad mistake. That might even have been the Countess de Villar, the Court lady for whom Mrs. Langhorne had asked. After a time, there were no voices outside. Mrs. Langhorne came in and knelt awhile; and then they went out together.

"I had to wait for the Queen to come out of the chapel," she said, as they were going along the dark passages.

"Was that the Queen?"

"The poor Queen," the other went on, "she will speak for us but she could not promise the king will interfere about that warrant." They were now out crossing the gardens. "What she said was 'that we have the truth on our side.' All those accusations, she was positive, could go for nothing—*vont se dissiper*—that was her word. She is most kind, most tender."

"If that was the Queen in the chapel, madam, she was crying her eyes out," said Meg.

"That may well be. Ah, what a pearl that man throws away! The poor little Queen!"

"Who throws her away?"

"Hush! don't let us speak here. See, on the river,

that barge over there where the music is. That is the King's barge."

The gorgeously coloured boat of State was unmistakable. The river traffic had been cleared where it floated far off, going down stream with a moving shimmer of many oars, its crimson and gold catching the light, its music fading into distance.

Hardly more than a week after that visit to Somerset House, the blow fell that changed history. A tragedy happened. The whole of London buzzed with the awful news. Luke Furrow in the Strand met a boy selling broadsheets, bellowing it out: "Barbarously murdered by the Papists."

"What vile stuff have you got now?" cried Luke.

"Want one, sir?" yelled the lad, holding one of the flimsy folio leaves flapping in his face. "Oi can't read, but it's all here. It must be true, for it's in print."

Luke drew back. "Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey! . . . O good Lord!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE MYSTERY AT PRIMROSE HILL

P RIMROSE clumps starred the grass long ago, where now brick and slate streets and a busy canal enclose a little hill of north-west London. Where now is Regent's Park Road, there was at the meeting of lanes a tavern called The White House. At a little distance from that tavern was found on the brambles in the depth of a ditch the body of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey, pierced by his own rapier. A jury sat all night at the White House, from Saturday to Sunday.

Fortunately a detailed report of that inquest has come down to our own time; and in our own days one of the most painstaking historians of old London, Alfred Marks, who absolutely made the subject his own, investigated afresh the Primrose Hill mystery of 1678. He called to his aid Dr. Freyberger, the surgeon who at the beginning of this twentieth century was the official expert employed by the British Government in *post mortem* examinations and murder trials. That was good enough authority.

In 1905, Marks made known the result of his investigation; the surgeon expert after "a careful study of the whole of the medical phenomena had decided that there could be no reasonable doubt that Sir Ed-

mund Berry Godfrey died by his own hand, stabbed with his own rapier, after setting open the front of his untorn coat."

Swayed by passion and prejudice, the opposite verdict at the time was a foregone conclusion. The great subject of debate all night was whether death was brought about by stabbing or strangulation. Nobody doubted that he was "barbarously murdered by the Papists." It was all proof of the Popish Plot and a strong argument for cutting off the Catholic Duke of York from the succession.

The Crown offered Five Hundred Pounds and a free pardon for information—a sum equal to more than three thousand pounds in modern money. Bedloe, the jail-bird, came forward at once and took the King's reward. Bribes multiplied "discoverers"—highwaymen, adventurers, the scum of the jails, were taken into Government pay. Men of proved infamy, like Oates, enjoyed State lodgings and dictated to Parliament and to the Privy Council. If a Member of the House doubted, he found himself suspected and sent to the Tower. If a judge did not swallow perjury—knowing in plain daylight the character of the witnesses, he risked being turned off the judicial Bench.

There was an outburst of passion, unequalled in the history of civilised communities. All the tongues of men and of angels would not have convinced the English people now that they were not in danger of regicide and massacre. In the midst of the panic, the body of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey was brought from the country into London, the coffin carried on the shoulders of relays of men in long black cloaks,

escorted by an immense procession in coaches and on foot, and by a dangerous rabble that had poured out from the town. More than that,—for some days the body lay in state at a meeting of the streets, surrounded by guards and by a surging crowd. There could have been no other object but the inflaming of public feeling. Then there was the funeral. Seventy-two black-gowned divines and about a thousand persons of distinction walking to St. Martins-in-the-Fields, followed by a riotous mob—"so heated," says North, that if they were opposed "anything, were it a cat or a dog, had all gone to pieces in a mimente."

Oddly enough, the murder was declared to have taken place at the Queen's palace at Somerset House, at the instigation of the Jesuits; and the discoverers, who wrote their sworn accounts, set down the most contradictory tales, both as to the spot where it happened and as to the transference of the body all the way from Somerset House to Primrose Hill four miles from town. False witnesses, as usual, did not agree; but nothing threw discredit on a witness. The nation wanted to believe in the Popish Plot; and they would not have followed contradiction of the "murther" of Godfrey. For that giant lie, called the Popish Plot, more than a score of innocent men perished on the scaffold. The jails were crammed. We have no account of the number that died in prison.

Printed leaves or broadsheets were circulated and lay in heaps on the open windows of the book-shops. Such slanders rooted in the English mind the common calumny that indulgences and absolutions were permission for perjury and for every crime. When we

still hear the street preacher of the lowest grade abusing the Catholic doctrine of indulgences and garbling history,—when we hear the old fable that in Jesuit teaching, “the end justifies the means”—when we flame with a just indignation at such libels, there may be some consolation in remembering that we are enduring, even in our day, the lingering effect of that enormous lie, the Popish Plot, that sent so many martyrs to the gallows and the prison grave.

During the terrible days after Godfrey’s death, all Catholics kept in the shelter of their homes, opening the door to no unknown comer. Luke Furrow could not help going round to Hartshorn Lane to see Sir Edmund’s faithful servant, Moor, who was broken-hearted. Every detail he gave confirmed the view that the coroner’s jury had not taken and that Godfrey’s own relatives must have strongly discouraged.

“It was here I saw him last, that Saturday morning,” said Moor, standing at the gate, “and he turned back and looked at me. He looked at me a little while very strangely; and whatever he had in his mind to say, he never said it: eight o’clock in the morning it was and a cold morning too. It was nearly a week before they found him. I noticed he was very down for days and days, as if something was going to happen. The night before, he came in from the Vestry Meeting up at St. Martin’s, and he pulled every drawer and press open, and every old trunk, reading any letters he found. Then he was in to the office and burned out two pairs of candles, sorting all his papers. There were some he particularly wanted to be sure to go into the

fire; he gave to the housekeeper—her apronful to burn.”

“Strange!” put in Luke.

“It *was* strange now I think of it,” said Moor, leaning against the gate-post. “Many a time he went for a long morning walk before the cases came on, or maybe of a Saturday morning. That day he had his new coat on, and now I think of it the minute before he went out of the house, he took it off again and told me to fold it by: ‘Here Moor,’ says he, ‘give me my old coat; it will serve well enough for to-day.’ So I helped him on with the old one—and why I couldn’t think, and I gave him the money out of the other coat—seven guineas and more; and that was in his pocket when they found him.”

“He seemed to know,” hazarded Luke.

“He did, Mr. Furrow. He made his preparations just as if he was going to die—settled his affairs, they say, at the Vestry Meeting the night before—fixed it up about his dole of bread going on, and set a little matter right where he thought he wronged a baker in some decision here; but the poor master never meant to wrong anyone.”

“He was very just,” agreed Luke, with a sudden sense of poignant sorrow. “The pity is that he was so sad—so downcast; for everyone says he was.”

“Why, that was the disease,” whispered Moor, laying a hand on Luke’s arm, “that was the mischief that was working in his blood. Poor man! he thought the apothecary could cure melancholy. He used to have him in here to let blood and then he was weak and worse than ever. Tuesday night he went up to his

cousin's house—to Mrs. Gibbon's—"Cousin," says he, "I do inherit my father's deep melancholy"—that was his word. Nothing would get it out of him, he said, it was inherited. Why, that's the whole trouble, Mr. Furrow. The master's father tried to kill himself; and Dr. Lloyd, the preacher, says the grandfather suffered chronic."

After that, Luke had to promise not to repeat the opinion. Moor declared many thought the same. "I'm only a poor servant man and of no consequence. No one would listen to me, and I'd only get my neck in the noose."

Truly there was no chance to make any voice heard. The arrests for the Popish Plot went on, and no protest could reach the ear of the King. Even the Queen's physician, Dr. Wakeman, was accused of "intent to poison," and the charge threw odium upon the Catholic Queen herself. Atkins, the young Catholic clerk of Mr. Samuel Pepys, was arrested; and though Atkins was let off, there came a time when Samuel Pepys himself—the Protestant Secretary of the Navy Office and the writer of the immortal Diary—was seized and carried by boat under the Traitor's Gate and lodged in the Tower. To return to those first days after the outbreak of the storm, one piece of news came soon enough that made Luke Furrow's blood run cold. Bedloe, the infamous discoverer, made it known that there was a Catholic in prison who was ready with a confirming narrative of the murder of Godfrey. The man had not at first sought the advertised reward; but a young lodger of his, who was in debt, had denounced him as a Papist and got him into prison; and

there in a freezing cold cell he gave way, declared he had already apostatized and put together a spurious account of "the horrid and detestable murder." This wretched man, apostate, perjurer and traitor, was Miles Prance, the silversmith. Even poor old Greene, the cushion-keeper, in the chapel at Somerset House, was one of those that he helped to send to the gallows.

Afterwards it was known that there had been a time when Miles Prance, the discoverer, relented and begged for an audience with the King. No one knew what he had to say, or he would have had little chance of being received. Brought into the royal presence, he flung himself upon his knees before King Charles, retracting his whole story, and imploring mercy. There was still time to save the three servants at Somerset House charged with the murder of Godfrey.

"Do you mean to say," said the King, "that this tale you have told us is false? Is it false—upon your salvation?"

"It is false—upon my salvation," Miles Prance declared.

He was kneeling on the floor, claiming the royal pardon. *This* was the truth. He had lied to get out of the torment of cold and out of the cell that was killing him. Would not the King be merciful and undo the blood guiltiness? If he were held in prison, Prance protested, he had no courage to withstand pressure; and what was the use of a false witness?

The second Charles showed his usual weakness and heartlessness. The man on the floor was dragged from his presence. His policy was to "let the law have its

way." Afterwards when Tyburn was glutted, he explained that he dared not pardon anyone.

Prance, the silversmith, went from bad to worse and became one of the regular paid blood-hounds. There was a priest who had been a customer of his and had once bought a small silver box, such as priests carried "to hold the hallowed oyl" in visiting the dying. That priest Miles Prance met in the street one day, and arrested him with his own hand.

Then indeed, the apostate had "fallen too low to fear a further fall."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TRIAL

THE great crisis of the trials for "the Plot" came in June. There had been three executions in January, including that of Pickering, the lay brother, who was accused of conspiring to kill the King for thirty thousand Masses. In May, the three Somerset House servants were hanged for the alleged murder of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey. On the thirteenth of June, the five Jesuits were found guilty, their lives sworn away by Oates and his crew. Dom Corker, the Benedictine, appeared with them, but had his sentence deferred, and remained six years in Newgate with sufficient liberty among his fellow prisoners to achieve a veritable apostolate, converting, it is said, no fewer than a thousand of the non-Catholics that passed through the prison. Friends outside helped him to carry on a fruitful career of charity and consolation; and there is no doubt the conditions of his imprisonment gave him the opportunity of saying Mass with prudent safeguards and administering the sacraments.

On the thirteenth of June the verdict was given against Father Whitebread, the provincial: the aged Father Harcourt, rector: Father Fenwick, the procurator, whose accounts must have brought him into touch with Langhorne: and Fathers Turner, and Gavan

alias Green—the last undoubtedly of Irish descent. On the following day, the fourteenth, Richard Langhorne, Esquire, of Middle Temple Lane, was to stand in the Sessions House of the Old Bailey for trial.

Early in the year his wife had been allowed to visit him; and as he did not know what he was charged with, or what sort of accusations the “discoverers” made, she brought him one or two broadsheets, the printed reports of trials that had already taken place. Richardson, the Chief Keeper, seized them. Mrs. Langhorne bravely appealed to the King. When next she went to Newgate, her husband had been given the papers, but she was not to be allowed to see him either then or after, till the end. Further than that concession about the broadsheets, appeal to the King was useless. His word was always that he would “let the law have its way.”

On the morning of the fourteenth, Luke Furrow was led into the Old Bailey with the first rush of the crowd, when St. Sepulchre’s clock struck, and the bolts of the door flew back. The noise outside had been Bedlam let loose: the language, Hell. He was badly crushed in the struggle; but he was in. One could smell for the first moment the chopped thyme and sweet herbs that strewed the Court, to prevent infection. Bunches of flowers were ranged in jars along the tables in front of the judges’ seats—another precaution to prevent jail fever and the infection of the foully clad majority. Over the high-backed chair reserved for the Lord Chief Justice, the arms of England, with the Lion and Unicorn and the Crown, shone golden against a crimson curtain.

Another half hour to wait. The uproar increased. Men stamped, as if this were the play-house or the bear-pit. Outside, a roaring rowdy noise went on all the time; and the light was obscured by black figures holding on to the window bars, as well as by climbers within, who had scrambled up to sit on the ledges. There was a gallery heavily packed also, where some ladies sat cloaked and veiled, absorbed in the crush.

In the obscurity Luke began to see better, and to recognize faces. There was Prance, pale and nervous, talking to a swaggerer in plumed hat and gold lace. They were at the corner of the judges' dais—privileged persons—discoverers. From the judges' door entered a third, turning round to observe the full Court as he came, with a wide-mouthed leer and eyes of infinite cunning. He talked to the others—to the traitor, Miles Prance. They were all in the same trade: "Hail fellow, well met!" That man who came in last, had the pride and assurance of the successful adventurer. He took off the broad hat to fan his face, and looked about. A queer face it was—unwholesome, pale as lard, the wide mouth set high up right in the middle of it, leaving an amazing chin, determined, impudent.

A murmur went round. "That's Oates!"

A man next to Luke said under his breath:—"The brazen ruffian—he's the devil's champion liar!"

"Thanks, friend!" Luke only glanced from the corner of his eye. In the roar of talk they were unheard, or they might have been trampled to death, cleared out of the way without judge or jury. For Dr. Titus Oates was the best-believed man in Eng-

land, His Majesty's servant, dictating to Parliament, Council and King.

Here, at last were the judges coming—five of them streaming in, white-wigged, scarlet-robed. The middle place on the dais was still empty, under the Royal Arms, reserved for Chief Justice Scroggs. The others were North and Atkins, Pemberton, Ellys and Dolben. The "Cryer" was bawling for silence, and the crowd stiffened into a frightened hush before the last words of his formula—"under pain of imprisonment!"

Luke had some hope of speaking for the defence. It had leaked out that the informer, Bedloe, was claiming to have been at the office and to have watched seditious documents being copied in one room while he walked about in the other. It was impossible to see from the front room to the back; nor had Bedloe ever been at the office.

Luke felt his pulses beating, and his throat dried up. He would go eagerly to speak the truth for his master. He was keen to get a chance of doing that. But a fear was on him; he felt every nerve of his body. If this were a matter of a stand-up fight, how easy it would be to plunge in and do his part, dashing with even more zest into the struggle if odds were against him. But to stand up and answer questions, not letting his unskilled tongue get entangled by lawyer's artifice, not to be outwitted by better trained wits—that was another thing. If he was more of a scholar, he might know what the questions were driving at. His truth and his daring should make up for inexperience. And he would keep cool—he would keep cool!

The next moment he was all in a glow and in a

flame. For his master—his dear master—was over there; and one knew of his coming by the noise and stir, the people rising to get sight of him.

Raised above the crowd, very worn in the face, there stood Richard Langhorne, his thin hands grasping the wooden ledge where the green herbs lay thick in front of him. There was no more time to think. The Clerk of the Court was calling to the Cryer.

Fortunately, we have still in existence the verbatim report of the Trial of Richard Langhorne, Esq., Barrister at Law. And from the pages printed officially at the time we can learn, almost as if we were present, what happened in the Old Bailey Court House on that June day in 1679.

"Cryer—make proclamation!" the Clerk of the Court called.

Then rang out the Cryer's voice:—"O yes! Our Sovereign Lord the King does strictly charge and command all manner of persons to keep silence under pain of imprisonment."

Then the Clerk's voice, in monotonous formula:—"Cryer, make an 'O yes!'"

Again the Cryer, in recitative like a grim sort of chaunt:—"O yes! You good men that are impanelled to enquire between our Sovereign Lord the King and Richard Langhorne, prisoner at the Bar—answer to your names!"

Then came the answering of the twelve "good men" all present, filling the seats behind the panelled partition of the jury-box—twelve gentlemen in costume of the period, Stuart periwigs, enormous coat-cuffs well laced, the jingle of a rapier when they moved.

The Cryer's voice :—"Richard Langhorne—hold up thy hand!"

Luke Furrow saw the thin hand held up bravely without a tremble. Would the prisoner challenge any of the jury? No; he accepted all.

Once more rattling off the formula, quickly now, the Court Cryer began with "O yes!" and demanded silence "under pain of imprisonment." And then the Clerk of the Court again told Richard Langhorne to hold up his hand, and the jury were ordered to look upon the prisoner and listen to the charge.

There was not a friend of Langhorne's that did not wonder what in Heaven's name it could be. Surely mere malicious talk would break like bubbles. Then came the charge, read by a lawyer with a knightly prefix to his name, Sir Creswel Levins. He thundered out all the absurd assertions of the Plot, mouthing them with a gravity that would have been ridiculous if there had not been a life at stake.

"This Treason was no less than to Murther the King." They all said "Murther" in those days; and they all pronounced it with a capital "M". . . "to Murther the King, to change the Religion, to overturn the Law, to raise an Army to effect all this by force, and in short to do all the mischief that men—if it be lawful to call such creatures men—could do."

Levins, in wig and gown, continued addressing the five judges, and the jury and the empty arm-chair under the Lion and Unicorn and Crown; and he went on to say solemnly that "a consult of Jesuits"—no doubt he made the most of such an awful word, and there was what is called in our days sensation in Court

—"a consult of Jesuits" was held on the 24th of April, at which these things were resolved upon, the forces to be raised beyond the sea. "And Mr. Langhorne he writ letters to procure these forces, and received commissions from beyond sea, whereof one was for himself to be Advocate General of the Army. All these things are laid to Mr. Langhorne's charge."

Then Richard Langhorne was asked, "Hold up thy hand! Art thou guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty."

"Culprit, how wilt thou be tried?"

The usual answer was made:—"By God and my Country."

Then stood up one of the informers—the bought men—and with him Miles Prance to be sworn. Through Luke Furrow's mind sprang detached words of loathing, and there was a quiver of contempt on his face. "And yet," he thought, "who am I to judge that wretch? Lord, keep a hand on me, that I myself may never fail or fall from Thee!" Luke's head was bent in horror, while the puny voice of Miles Prance mumbled the words, calling Heaven to help him according to his truth; and Prance was there that he might lie.

Dugdale, the other man, had sworn to the existence of the Plot; and now Miles Prance swore that he had heard many prominent Catholics talk about the killing of the King and the raising of an army. "And I heard Fenwick say"—that was Father Fenwick, one of the five priests of the Society of Jesus, already tried—"I heard Fenwick say Mr. Langhorne was to have a great hand in it." A vile charge and cunning, when the

man named was already condemned, and could not be called!

Then everyone stood up. The Lord Chief Justice was coming in. He had a dreaded name, and there was much craning of necks at the back of the Court. There—that was Scroggs! He looked the type of the hard-drinker of his century; and it was said he led a violent sort of life. But there he was seated, in the middle of the Bench of Judges, the highest dignitary of the Law, robed in wig and ermine and scarlet that showed up his bloated countenance. He leant back in his chair under the Crown and the Arms of England; and he was perfectly aware, and the other judges were perfectly aware, that this case was already decided. Five Jesuits had been condemned by another jury yesterday, and their legal adviser was the prisoner at the Bar to-day. Sentence had not yet fallen upon the condemned Jesuits; but if any of these men were released, the man who released them would not be Caesar's friend. Even more: if the wrong verdict were to come in, the whole Papist-hating mob outside, baulked of their prey, would be likely enough to break in, attack the Bench like so many wolves, do their best to take vengeance on the Sessions House. No judge on the Bench in those days had the courage in his soul to resist the people, to refuse paid witnesses, or to unmask perjury. So Chief Justice Scroggs sat down, to further profane the Royal Arms that shone above his head against the crimson curtain, in that Court of Injustice.

Then came Titus Oates in his Geneva gown and bands, his cunning black eyes a-glitter, his lank hair

hanging long, his queer mouth showing above the great chin like a slash half-way up the face. Father Whitebread at his trial had protested that Oates had not said three true words since he came into the Court; and the original "discoverer" of the Plot proved himself no more worthy of credit now. He trotted out all the Plot fables—how Pickering the lay-brother and the other man Grove (both condemned now with Father Whitebread) were to be rewarded for killing the King, Grove to receive fifteen hundred pounds, and Pickering—as a religious to whom money was useless—thirty thousand Masses: how the King was to be "poysoned," and Langhorne thought the Queen's physician poor-spirited that he would not venture it for ten thousand pounds: how an army was to be raised, and on his own return from Spain he had brought Mr. Langhorne letters from his sons at the Jesuit College, and Mr. Langhorne showed him commissions all ready for the officers of the army—Arundell of Wardour, Powis, Bellasis and Petre, as well as a commission for Langhorne himself as Advocate General of the Army. All these commissions were sealed with the Jesuit seal.

The Jesuit seal—the "I.H.S." surmounted with the Cross—had been taken at the arrest of Father Whitebread. And it is a remarkable instance of popular credulity and self-delusion, that the existence of a seal with the Jesuit device seemed to be accepted as part of the fiction that it was used for signing army commissions. How was defence possible before Courts that had lost all sense of the absurd and of right reasoning?

Oates wanted to prove he was in London at the time

of the consult of the 24th of April of the year before. There was overwhelming evidence that he was at St. Omers—a spy and impostor at St. Omers—all the time. Sixteen of the students were over now, who had seen him there; but doubt was cast from the Bench on their evidence—because they were friends!

Langhorne cross-examined, claiming his right as a lawyer, and the evidence of Titus Oates was on the verge of destruction. Oates contradicted himself. Langhorne could compare his present statements with what he had sworn elsewhere;—that was the just result of having read those broadsheet reports that had been passed with such difficulty into the prison. But Langhorne could not be allowed a victory. The Bench interfered, and ruled that no reference should be made to what was sworn by these same witnesses when they appeared in other cases. All the defence rested on his power to demolish the credibility of the Crown witnesses. But undaunted by the flagrantly unjust decision he attacked Oates from other ground.

The perjurer became entangled by the rapid questions. He could not tell whether, on that occasion, he came from Dover to London by coach or on horseback. He could not remember where he rested in London the first night—having caught sight in Court of the owner of the house he claimed to have stayed at. He alleged, under pressure, that he *was* in that house, though in disguise, and made out at one moment that his stay was six days, and at another that it was twenty. Presently he made a sudden appeal to the Bench, asking that he might only “receive such questions as were reasonable and proper,” and that Mr. Langhorne

should only be allowed to examine him "through the Court." As he put it, being hard driven for escape: "Let him ask the Court, and the Court ask me."

It was true he had brought a letter from the boy in Spain, and so he had wormed himself into the office at Middle Temple Lane. Oates had seen Langhorne but once or twice, and now he swore they had met many times. Langhorne knew his record—a spy pretending to be a convert, expelled from one College after another on the Continent. Yes, and before that there had been a history. He had disgraced his Protestant friends when he had been vicar at Bobbing in Kent, and afterwards at Hastings was imprisoned for a further delinquency. He broke prison, and crossed the seas, to take up a more lucrative trade as a false witness, preparing his stock-in-trade by living in and out of the Jesuit Colleges. The Protestant chaplaincy in the Navy was a mere interlude; from his naval post too he had found himself ejected, his name blotted again by a criminal charge.

"I remember he professed himself a Catholic," said Langhorne. "I see he is a minister. I desire to know when he left the Protestant religion and became a convert as he called himself—call it what you will—when he left off being a Protestant and became a Papist—that's what I mean."

Oates tried to stop that question, though it was being made "through the Court." Dreading where it might lead the witness objected, "He does it for nothing but to quarrel!"

But the Lord Chief Justice asked, "When did you leave the Church of England?"

Dr. Titus Oates wriggled painfully:—"My Lord, if it be the pleasure of the Bench to ask me that question—" No doubt he said "If it's the pleashaw . . . to awsk me—" But we shall take what he said from the verbatim report, without ornamenting all his words with the elegant drawl, which happened to be historically one of his characteristics.

"You ought to answer," said Scroggs, "though it is nothing to the purpose."

"Then I answer—It was either in February or in March, seventy-six—New Style, seventy-seven." About Old and New Style he made a parade of accuracy.

"My Lord,"—sharply from Langhorne—"I desire to know whether he had any benefice."

To which Oates had to reply, "Yaas—I was some time Vicah of Bobbing, in Kent. But I suppose this is to make me accuse myself of something, whereby I might fawfeit my living." He made out that he was still vicar "by a point of equity," and added, "Only for going beyond sea without leave, I am still—"

Langhorne cut in:—"When did you come to your Vicarage?"

"In sixteen seventy-two," said Oates.

"You became a Papist in sixteen seventy-seven. I ask this question"—the lawyer who was also the prisoner faced the Bench—"whether he did leave his living before he turned Papist?"

"My Lord," Oates burst out, "I am not willing to answer that question."

Scroggs had fitfully an inclination to rough justice. Perhaps the shiftiness of the man irritated him; for here he backed up Langhorne. "When did you leave

your living? Did you leave it before you went away?"

Then Oates was hard pushed. "It was not very long before; but the reason why, I am not willing to tell. The air was not so good in that part of Kent, and I had not my health; and that was one reason—And for other reasons best known to myself."

Langhorne followed up swiftly:—"After he became a Papist, I desire to know whether he became a Jesuit. Were you in any Order there?"

Here Scroggs must have seen how the Catholic lawyer was dangerously heading to outwit the informer. The trustworthiness of Crown witnesses—which was the very foundation of these trials—was going to be knocked to pieces. Oates had *not* been a Jesuit, but he had claimed that at one time he was, and that got into the print of his "Narrative." But the Crown was not going to give up Oates, not even if he were proved to be contradicting himself. Langhorne was close upon showing him up as a reckless liar, disreputable even in his early days, an illegal claimant for a church benefice, with the hindrance of some incriminating episode at Bobbing in Kent. Langhorne had to be stopped before he pilloried the Crown witness. Scroggs took advantage of his own over-ruling position.

"Mr. Langhorne," he said, "it is not a proper question. We ought not to ask it him. You are a man of law, and therefore you know it is not fair to ask any person a question about a criminal matter, that may bring himself in danger." What precisely he meant, or how much he knew, was never told.

In one of Oates's "Narratives" argued Langhorne, this witness said, speaking of the journey to London

from St. Omers for the "consult"—"there came over nine of us, all Jesuits."

"Narratives are no evidence," said Scroggs. Nor would the judges allow reference to obviously false swearing in the other trials.

Langhorne's heart must have gone down at so unjust a cutting away of the ground from under his line of defence. His one chance had been to destroy the credibility of the accusers. But he held on gallantly—how gallantly we can understand, if we remember that Richard Langhorne had been brought into Court out of Newgate Prison, where he had undergone for nine months "the miseries of solitary confinement."

The infamy of the chief Crown witness had, in fact, gone beyond Langhorne's knowledge. For he had not heard the trial of the day before; and it had come out that Oates had been once in London "two days without food," and Father Fenwick—whom he was sending to the gallows now—had given him money and kept him from starving.

When Bedloe came forward to be sworn, he said the sort of things that made Luke Furrow gasp. He told the story about seeing from one room into the other; but he told it with barefaced assurance, and gave all sorts of details. Mr. Coleman was with him, when he went to Middle Temple Lane, he said. That was safe swearing, for—the Duchess of York's secretary—had already gone to Tyburn. They walked about in the outer room, and saw Mr. Langhorne copying treasonable papers in the private office. He copied army commissions and seditious letters into a large

parchment book, about three inches thick, which lay on the desk.

There was no desk in that private office. Every book and paper had been left for seizure, and the parchment book could not be produced. Above all—there was no possibility of seeing from one room to the other. When all was over, Scroggs himself visited the place one day out of curiosity, and came out declaring Langhorne had been an innocent man.

Luke Furrow had meant to keep cool. But he couldn't stand hearing Bedloe swearing that he looked into the inner office while he walked in the outer one with Coleman, and watched Langhorne copying sedition. He wanted to shout, "It's a lie!" When he could bear it no longer, he sprang up, gathering all the strength of his lungs. His face must have given him away; for at once he was seized, and the next moment he was hustled out, almost torn to pieces. At the entrance, he got his back to the doorpost, and fought furiously to remain in the Court. Then there was a shout; some official called for order. He was flung out against the whole rabble; and no matter how he tried, he could not get in again.

It was then Lord Castlemain appeared in the Court House, having got in at the back by the judge's door. He reported that several witnesses for the defence were being ill-used and beaten outside, and kept from entering. All the judges said that it was "very horrid and unjustifiable, and not a thing to be allowed." All the same, they did nothing practical to amend the injustice. They announced that any person arrested

would be put in prison; but there was no one to arrest anybody, and the riot went on outside.

One of Langhorne's witnesses as to the lodging of Oates, was afraid to give evidence because of what might happen to her afterwards; and the prisoner chivalrously desired that she should not be sworn as she so feared the rabble outside.

Langhorne defied the Court to produce the large parchment book. He denied everything. Any sort of copying by his own hand was impossible with the extent of his professional work done. No papers had been removed. Where was the book? . . . Then, as to Captain Bedloe—was he not, like Dr. Oates, already handsomely paid and expecting further reward?

Judge Pemberton boiled over with wrath. "Do you suppose that the witnesses are corrupted and bribed? Do you think, Mr. Langhorne, that the King would bribe his witnesses?"

That was a crude way of putting it; but Langhorne had made his point.

Oates interrupted nervously, "There are Papists in Court with their swords on." It was the Lord Mayor of London, from his seat on the dais, who told him he was "safe enough."

At last came Langhorne's speech, asserting loyalty and innocence. He had been brought there after long and solitary imprisonment, knowing nothing of the charges against him. It was only a week ago that he was allowed to see his friends. Having no opportunity of otherwise preparing a defence, he had relied upon showing that the accusing witnesses were not worthy of credence in any Court: that they came forward with

contradictions and false statements. "And if but one false statement is proved, it is enough to discredit a witness."

Then Scroggs summed up dead against him; and after a short retirement, the jury came back with the verdict of "Guilty."

"Upon which," says the printed contemporary report, "there was a very loud shout." The record tells of no suppression of the applause.

The Recorder called for the five Jesuits to be brought into Court. They had received the same verdict the day before, Langhorne, who would have been strong to defend them, being out of the way in prison.

The whole atrocious sentence was passed on the six prisoners together—to be carried on hurdles to Tyburn, and there to be "hanged, drawn and quartered." The victim was supposed by law to be cut down alive for the last barbarities; but in pity that part of the sentence was sometimes commuted by express order. In the case of scores, the full penalty was carried out pitilessly on the man still living; and it was the possibility of that excruciating torment that all the martyrs had to face.

"After the sentence," says the record, "there was a very great acclamation."

When the uproar had gone down, Father Whitebread asked if they might see their friends—"as we have not long to live."

Langhorne, as calmly as if he were free and conducting a case, asked if his clients might see him "in regard of their business that I have had in my hands."

The Keeper of Newgate interposed harshly that nobody should be in private with him.

"My Lord," said Langhorne, appealing to the judge, "I hope my wife and children may?"

Then Richardson relented. "God forbid he shouldn't have his wife and children with him!"

One week after, the five Jesuits went to a living martyrdom, on the 20th of June, every one of them suffering the unmitigated torture—"cut down alive."

Richard Langhorne was kept in prison. Could not anything be got out of the Jesuits' lawyer with a bribe? Could not Langhorne be tempted yet to give in and say there *was* a Popish Plot—this man who cared so much for his wife and children?

CHAPTER XVII

THE REAL RICHARD LANGHORNE

THE landlady called up the stairs at the second last house in Cherry Pie Alley; and Meg ran down. She was not so different after all from Reuben Buckle's little daughter that once flitted up and down that other staircase at the Sign of the Silver Cup. The curls were tucked under the flat bit of cambric. The big apron like a pinafore enveloped her gown down to her shoes. She was getting Luke's morning draught ready.

Jonson, the serving-man from the Langhorne's, was standing in the narrow strip of hall, hat in hand. He looked strangely older.

"My lady sends you this, Mistress Furrow." He let himself out without another word.

Meg took the sealed letter upstairs, so that Luke could read it too. Ah! to-night he was to see him—at six of the clock to-night. And would Meg come to the house during the morning, and Mr. Furrow too—"for a special reason?"

The special reason was that there had been something brought from Newgate, which Mrs. Langhorne thought the Furrows would like to see. The lady of the house was already gone out. Never once did that valiant woman try to dissuade her husband from his

constancy. Her exclusion from the prison was over now; jail regulations were relaxed for the final seven days.

Jonson brought the Furrows to that back room off the hall where Luke had seen Mr. White long ago. There was no curtained four-poster now filling most of the floor space, and Luke noticed a second door in the panelling that would lead to the very end of the hall. The guest had been safe here.

But what memories the place brought back!

Before he had time to tell Meg this was the room, young Mr. Richard came in with a bundle of papers.

"I dare not leave these out of my hand," he said. Oaken presses filled the two corners by the hearth; but evidently these papers were not to be risked on shelves. The room seemed to be his own now, with books about, a saddle on the floor, a gun and a fishing-rod hanging up, looking as if they had been unused for many a day. "We never know when we shall be searched, or what they might take. These papers are going into the keeping of a friend. My mother had them from Abbot Corker. I am afraid she sat up half the night reading them. You will remember Father Corker, the Benedictine. He goes rather freely—but always detained, you know. He says Mass to-morrow. It's a great joy to my father. The turnkeys and Richardson can't make him out."

The face of the eldest son lighted up with a defiant smile. The elusive family likeness was there for a moment.

"Can't make him out?" Luke questioned.

"Yes; our prisoners spent most of the time in prayer.

Wonderful, isn't it? And the turnkey a few times has caught my father kneeling on a big book—on the stone floor, you know, not knowing the man was there. My father takes it all mighty cheerily. Perhaps I may tell you he says he has 'enjoyed such a perpetual peace' all the time, that his consolation can't have been a natural thing. That's what he thinks; he calls it a divine gift. You know what my father is. Heaven was always to him as near as the Strand or the next house." The boy tried to smile at that way of putting it, but his eyes filled with sudden tears. "He did try hard to live, though—for our sake. But here is what he wrote when they told him it was settled and couldn't be altered. Newgate never killed the spirit in him—the joy, you know; and that's what they can't make out."

Three seats were set—high-backed oak chairs—about a little table, in that very room where Luke had seen Mr. White. Luke wondered if this was the very table where the two candlesticks had stood. Everything in the room had an air of mingled tragedy and triumph. It was a sacred place. For had not Father Whitebread passed, only a few days ago, unflinching, through excruciating torment, to the welcome of his Lord—some day surely to be counted with the martyrs.

The papers were opened out on the little table. The three were seated round it. Meg's hood fell back on her shoulders. Her big blue eyes were full of a wondering awe, for she recognised this writing, knowing it just as Luke knew it. The lines looked like poetry, short lines and long. No doubt Mr. Langhorne was allowed a quill and ink in his prison room, and those

228 AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP

were all the scraps of paper and ends of parchment he could lay hold of. Young Mr. Richard shoved some towards Meg and some towards Luke. Here were thoughts straight out of Richard Langhorne's heart, written when he had heard the irrevocable decision.

It is told me I must Die
 Ignominiously,
 By the hand of the Executioner—
 O Happy News!
 I receive the Judgment of Death
 As an Enemy to Cæsar.

Whilst in the meantime
 My Jesus knows
 My Conscience rejoicing testifies
 That I never yet Harboured
 In my Heart at any time
 So much as one Disloyal Thought.

The next lines revealed that, when he heard the shout in the Court House, and the yelling of the mob as the prisoners were removed, his soul was united with the Divine Victim of another Condemnation.

The people cry out, "Crucifie! Crucifie!"
 He who was perfect Innocency
 Hath set before me His Example.
 He opened not His mouth,
 He justifieth not Himself,
 He forgave and prayed for His Enemies.
 O what Happiness
 To be dignified with so many Circumstances
 Of the Death of Jesus.

He hath cleansed thee by His Blood;
 He hath given thee His Body for thy Security;
 Upon His Cross he declared thee the son of His
 Mother,

AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER CUP 229

And now He gives thee His Cross to bear,
As an evidence that thou art one of His.

.

O Jesu,
The Comforter of the Afflicted,
The Refuge of the Oppressed,
The Redeemer of the Captive,
The Hope of the Distressed—
Come quickly!

.

It is told me I must Die.
O Happy News!
Come on—my dearest Soul,
Behold thy Jesus calls thee.

.

O what Happiness!
I am going to the Place of My Rest,
To the Land of the Living,
To the Heaven of Security,
To the Kingdom of Peace,
To the Palace of my God,
To the Nuptials of the Lamb,
To sit at the Table of my King,
To feed on the Bread of Angels,
To see what no Eye hath seen,
To hear what no Ear hath heard,
To enjoy what the Heart of Man cannot comprehend.

.

I give Him all that I can call my own,
I am willing to Die
For His Glory,
For His Love,
I am willing to Die for Him as He Died for me.
Come on—my Soul—let us go!

When they had passed these papers round—hundreds of lines with the recurring words “O Happy News,” Divine love reaching almost to ecstasy—when they had looked at the familiar writing, and then looked at each other, it was Meg who broke the silence

with a sigh of wonder: "Oh! but your father is a saint!"

"That's not what *he* thinks." The son promptly turned towards her another group of lines, an appeal from the prodigal to "the best of all Fathers"—

I have done nothing of myself but evil,
From the time I first knew what God was.

Luke read it too. "The more the saint!" he cried. "Good Lord!—to think of *him* saying *that*! What's to be said of us?"

"Oh! well"—with a wave of the boy's hand, "there's the real mind of my father. They didn't know him a bit in the Courts, did they?"

"Not a bit!"

"And perhaps you don't know, Furrow, how they've been bargeing into him. Father Fenwick"—The lad bowed his head slightly at the name, for was *he* not gone with the martyrs too?—"Father Fenwick the procurator, gave him leave to tell about some small money matters—things of no real consequence—to see if that would satisfy them. But they saw through it, and they won't wait any longer, as they can get nothing out of him. They've been offering him everything, Furrow—remember that!—to go free if he would only say one word, and say there *was* a plot. They have offered him free pardon and any money—heaps of money—the highest position in the land—if he would say one word, if he would name one name, for that would admit it all. They want—do you see?—to have it to say that there was a Popish Plot. But they can't get him to say there *was*, when there was not."

"That's grand—mightily grand!" broke out Luke. "They can't buy Mr. Langhorne."

The boy held up his head with cheeks aflame. No wonder he was proud of such a father. And well may we all be proud of that London lawyer of the seventeenth century. For if the legal adviser of the Jesuits could have been pointed out by historians as a witness on the other side, the Titus Oates Plot might have taken a different aspect not only then but centuries after. It would have been harder to bring out the truth for all time, if that one man had failed. But he was not to be bought—not of the stuff of which "discoverers" are made. It is a historical fact that he was offered life, fortune, position, any public honour, if he would testify against one name so as to admit there was a conspiracy. But rather he went to his death.

There were also among his papers "Acts of my Soul," founded upon the seven words on the Cross, the Acts beginning with pardon of all his enemies and of all those who had sworn falsely against him.*

"For us, he tried all he could to keep his life," the son said, with a tremble in his voice. "He even petitioned to go to serve his Majesty abroad; but I'm afraid His Majesty's heart had hardened."

Luke felt with exultation that he knew his master now—never before.

All three stood up.

"You are to see him, Furrow?"

"This evening at six."

* See "A Remonstrance of Piety and Innocence," containing last words and prison writings, printed anonymously by Dom James Corker, 1683. A copy in British Museum Library.

"Don't be startled. He looks changed. They have worn him down, but they have not broken him." Luke gripped his hand.

"Thank Her for this great favour."

"Ah! well," was the answer—"she wanted you to know him."

But Luke's voice broke when he tried to say:—"So late. . . !"

CHAPTER XVIII.

“AS IF I COULD EVER FORGET YOU!”

THE scene was a large stone-built room of Newgate prison. In a recess where a narrow window was deep-set in the thickness of the wall, a doomed prisoner sat, with a crowd pressing round him for last words.

Luke Furrow flung his hat on a bench, and came forward with a hushed awe, peering thirstily yet reverently at the figure before him. Richard Langhorne was there, with the level sunlight coming in upon him from the deep window in the wall.

Aged the prisoner was, and even more wan and worn than at the trial a month ago. But as a group of other people rose and drew away still facing him, the doomed prisoner looked for the next, and saw Luke, and his eyes brightened with recognition. This was Saturday late; and all would be over on Monday morning. Luke's inmost soul thrilled with awe to think of the experience towards which the moments were rushing. That worn-out man with the steadfast light in his sunken eyes—he was to go, straight and sure, through unspeakable torment, into eternal beatitude. He was going out of this world to the welcome of the martyrs who have faced everything, and given everything for their Lord.

Luke Furrow fell upon his knees. Among so many clients at the last, there could be only a few moments for each one. He caught the poor hands—mere skin and bone—and began to cover them with kisses. They were already sacred. If there was time for nothing more, there was time at least to show that love had overflowed into veneration. So much he longed to say, that after all he could say next to nothing—only “Master, remember *me*!”

“As if I could ever forget you, Furrow!” There was reproach in the tone, the tender reproach that is almost playful. “And don’t you fear—I have heard everything—how they flung you out of Court when you wanted to speak for me. Why, they might have clapped you into prison, lad; and this affair of mine is far better as it is. Oh! no—you mustn’t look sad for me. What is it, after all? They have told me I must die. What good fortune! What news of joy!” The rapid murmur was all for Luke, as he knelt close to the knee of the bent figure that the crowd pressed round. The hands had released themselves, and were holding his arms with a tense pressure. This was all for him—for him alone! He felt the breath upon his face, the cheek almost touching his.

“What happy news!—That is how I think of it. I am going to the best of Fathers, to the Redeemer who sets us poor prisoners free—to Jesus, Whom we love on earth and *see* in Heaven. I keep saying to myself, ‘Come on, my dearest soul: He wants you to put away all fear!’ I am going, that I may live . . . Is He not our Life? Think!—‘*In Him was Life.*’”

And suddenly—with one tremendous flash illuminat-

ing Heaven and Earth as if he had never seen before—Luke knew what he had lived for.

He had always wanted life so eagerly. This was like the force of that other message. He knew now the martyrs gave royally and in brief space even as their Lord does. All in a few moments had come to him the meaning of his boyhood's restlessness and his unsatisfied desire. Did he want life? That was Beyond. "In Him was Life."

He had not been let go without a word, though so many waited and the moments were few. He could stay no longer. He was up on his feet and after one last look—away! But there was new knowledge, like a treasure laid up in his heart.

Life was not to be found where he had sought it. Towards the Bright Gates his master was hastening. He—the Eternal Who has made us for Himself—was Life.

Luke went homeward as if in a dream. He did not want to lose that light by letting it mingle with the shadows that made up the outer world. Sometimes he gave a great sigh, hurrying along the London streets. Why had he not guessed this? Why not—even when Father Whitebread, now in Heaven, went so near telling him? It was a time of terrible events and strong emotions; the spiritual element asserted itself. Eternal things loomed large, when the material world seemed to be wrecked by injustice—a futile transitory place.

He hurried up the stairs at the lodgings in that alley off Shire Lane, and the arms of little Meg drew down his neck, and he kissed her without a word. It was only later he had self-control to talk to her. "Come

here, Meg dearest; I must tell you what he said to me—for there is nothing in Heaven or on earth that you and I do not share.”

When he had told all he could about that last interview, he broke out into longing: “Oh, if we could keep him—now that we know him. There is eternity for *him*; but we are alone here. It would be so much for us to have him even a little longer!”

Then Meg Furrow said a simple thing that held the truth. Does not it often come from the mouths of children?

“But, Luke,” she said, “I am sure he won’t forget us in Heaven.” And then the human suffering of it seized her and she wept with great sobs, and Luke with his arms around her could speak but little comfort.

This was Saturday night. There was only Sunday. The thought of the Langhorne children and the wife was a grief that never went away.

Afterwards Luke paced about the lodging, that was so neat in spite of Meg’s load of sorrow. It worried her that he could take no food. She had a housewife’s idea that for a man it is harder to bear trouble without a meal.

Suddenly he stopped in his walking up and down. “Hearken, Meg, I have a plan—a great plan. Give me something to eat. The pasty has gone cold, has it? Never mind. I must be strong for the morning and have all my wits about me.”

She heated supper again. What was the plan?

“I have thought it all out,” he said. “I’ll get to speak to the King to-morrow. Yes, I can. I’ll go to

the King myself, and he will listen to me too. I have that to say that will make him listen."

"But you can't get into the palace, Luke. Even if you go to Whitehall, how can you speak to him?"

"Not at Whitehall. It's like a city, and I could never get to the King's own part of it. But he walks in the Park in the morning, and other people have got their chance to speak to him; why should not I?"

"And would you have courage, Luke? Would you go right up to him?"

"I'd get to talk to him."

"About Mr. Langhorne?"

"About Mr. Langhorne. We must leave nothing undone, and I believe this would succeed. You see I have a claim. We sheltered the King long ago in our house at Bush Farm. He was flying for his life after Worcester—getting off to France. I remember seeing him there when I was a very small boy. And he *was* hungry—as hungry as a stray dog—eating his supper by our fire."

All at once Meg remembered a day when he showed her that room at Bush Farm. It was one of those times when Luke tried to make love, and she would have nothing to say to him. Her dear Luke!! She was much more interested in him even then—if the truth were known—than in the big four-poster where the King slept, and the hearth where His Majesty dried his riding boots and his steaming feet. Of course she had heard all that story, and how the King picked the bone of the goose in his fingers, and shared the griddle-cake and honey with the small boy.

The plan delighted her.

"You don't think it a wild idea, do you, Meg?"

"Why, no, of course not. I think you are ever so clever to have thought of it, and ever so brave."

"It was a poor house compared to what kings have," Luke began again, making good inroads into the pasty now, buoyed up with a new energy. "But we gave him the best we had. And I do believe every one of the Furrows would have died rather than betray him."

How proud Meg was of Luke! He was right in this plan; they both were sure he was. It would be mean of the King to refuse mercy, when the Furrows had helped him to save his own life; and kings could not be mean. Luke had wondered before now if King Charles remembered. But he would be reminded; he would have to remember.

"And are you sure, Luke, that he can let any prisoner off?"

"Of course, yes. That's what they call the King's prerogative of mercy."

She clapped her hands with joy. They would save Mr. Langhorne yet. Then she stopped suddenly:—"It is selfish though, isn't it?—when he is half into Heaven?"

How like a child she was—how adorably like a child, leaning over to him with her clasped hands, and her great blue innocent eyes!

"But think of the wife," he said. "It's awful!"

She looked at him, with just a little wonder, trying to weigh things, and finding these tremendous issues quite beyond her. She was like little Meg long ago at the Silver Cup—the little Meg that sat opposite him holding the spoon of bread and milk, while she tried to think out the problems of a puzzling world.

"Oh! yes—even from half into Heaven! What it would be to that dear wife—and sweet little Mistress Laetitia—and the boys! Oh! yes—yes!" with clasped hands, "you'll do it, Luke—you are so clever!"

"I believe I can. All we want to do is to force a delay." So said Luke, transferring his attention from the pasty to a pewter cup filled with country wine that had come from the Legatts' estate in Essex through the Langhorne's house. "That was a good supper, Meg. I must be strong for to-morrow. I'm going to think out everything I have to say."

Meg was all excitement. No more tears. It would be good to "force a delay." If they could gain time, there were other witnesses that could be brought forward—all those that couldn't get a hearing in the Court, and others that had arisen since a month ago. Time and fair play, Luke said, would reverse the judgment. And what was the good of a King, if he had nothing to say to it?

Luke threw off his coat for Meg to sew on the loose gilt button and she insisted on brushing all his clothes, his hat and his shoes. "You know, Luke dear," she protested, dodging him with the brush, "I can do it ever so much better than you can!" He was to go on with his supper. What?—he had not finished? "Why, Luke, you won't be strong enough to speak up to the King." It was wonderful to feel she was making him ready for a royal audience.

He had supped heartily. A definite plan steadies a man in grave anxiety—some effort to be made, something to be done. He would let nothing stop his pur-

pose. If he could not speak to the King in the Park, he would find some way of getting in at Whitehall.

First, the two Furrows heard Mass very early at the Bavarian Embassy. And then Meg gave her husband a warm admiring embrace and kisses with childlike repetition, at the door of the lodging—in fact downstairs on the street step. With a little gold pin she fastened something inside his coat.

“Take care of yourself, Luke dearest!”

“Nothing can happen in His Majesty’s presence,” he said, looking down upon her, with his hands still round her shoulders. “Good-bye awhile, dear heart. And if I am not back at mid-day to dinner, it will be only because I have to go to the Palace.”

It was a July morning of blue sky and glorious sunshine. How splendid he looked—so she thought—striding down the narrow street towards Shire Lane. Before turning the corner he looked back and waved a hand, and she blew him a kiss.

The sun was already hot, when he walked along the Strand and passed the village of Charing, where the old stone Cross of Queen Eleanor had long since been destroyed, and King Charles on horseback was up instead—erected in recent years. Whitehall Palace was to the left, immense in extent, looking out upon the Park of St. James’s; and in the far distance in front of him, was the red-brick pile of towered St. James’s Palace, very much as we see it to-day. St. James’s clock struck ten, and the church bells of London were beginning to ring in a merry medley behind him. His heart rose at the thought of saving Mr. Langhorne. Striding along the road to see the King this was the

grown up adventurous boy that had gone pattering about the old farmhouse long ago, fearless with a purpose—bent on seeing who was the stranger that came in the night. His present plan was larger; but the same King was at the end of his adventure.

Here now was St. James's Park, a very grand place, planted in this reign with fine alleys of trees. It was reserved for the fortunate folks who could promenade on a Sunday morning richly dressed, or drive in a glass coach and six. Luke had heard that crowds went there to parade after church, and on fine days the King came along surrounded with his gentlemen.

In his plain coat, much worn though adorned with gilt buttons, and in his beaver hat well brushed by Meg, Luke Furrow stood hesitating in sight of the Park trees. Perhaps there were some uniformed officials who wouldn't let him in. He was driven to strategy.

He went up a lane called Spring Gardens, and made his way at the other end of it to a shrubbery, from which he could watch the newly built arch of the Horse Guards towards Whitehall. He was actually in the Park now, though concealed, and it would be time enough to stir, when a group was being cheered and applauded coming in from the direction of the Palace.

He thought of his dear master, penned between prison walls on this glorious day: thought with a long sigh of dread about the butchery to-morrow, inevitable if this effort failed. There was romance enough in him to believe it would succeed. How many a forlorn hope a young man might carry through, no better gifted than he, a faithful servant with tact and courage.

Then he mused over Mr. Richard Langhorne's supernatural view of the position. Oh! but there would be time enough for Heaven later. And Mrs. Langhorne's heart should not be left breaking. And what of the boys and little Laetitia, that had gone straight off from the Embassy chapel Mass to the Prison?

Then Luke thought of Life. "*In Him was Life!*" The revelation of the night before was slightly dimmed with the activity of the morning. It was as if all the human breath of this world had again clouded that window of his soul. But he knew where Life was now.

And next, Luke Furrow found himself thinking of Bush Farm, the home of his childhood and of the very small boy in the long coat pattering about the house and finding the firelit room and the refugee stranger, *that* was the King—*this* King!

Everything over there at Whitehall suggested splendour and power. So much the better! The King had not only troops of guards and a small city for a palace, and all England paying him homage; he had the final word that controlled life and death.

Hotter and hotter the sun blazed. To Luke's eyes the glare towards that gate made the very air dance in misty light. From time to time the trumpets sounded. It could not be long now till His Majesty the King would come. Here, about the broad walk, the Park was filling up. Undoubtedly His Majesty was expected now. A far-off clock struck eleven.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE VALIANT PETITIONER

QUICKENED by intense anxiety, Luke Furrow's eyes detected a stir at the Horse Guards' gate. There was a crowd about the arch. The crowd was parting, leaving a clear passage in the middle.

The fashionable groups along the main avenue stood back upon the grass, and became massed in solid lines at each side of the walk. The men uncovered their heads. Everyone was looking at the arch towards Whitehall. From that direction two rows of gentlemen of the Court were approaching. No one was noticing anything else; all attention was fixed on the numerous and brilliant group, that paced forward in the sunshine, all plumes and shining gold, all movement and buzz of masculine voices. Luke watched the swinging figures advancing. They walked as if the whole place belonged to them—as indeed it did.

He slipped forward among the well-dressed people, an unnoticed intruder. He pushed his way into the front row at the edge of the path. The ranks of courtiers were nearing, his heart beat, not with fear but with excitement. This thing was to be done; he was only anxious to do it well. The moment was almost come.

Some of the men walked hat in hand. Some had cloaks of brilliant colour flung over one shoulder or held on the arm. There was a glitter of gold, a jingle of rapier hilts, a tramp of shoes that flashed with silver buckles and even with jewels.

"Haw, haw!" came a laugh. Some half-forgotten memory startled Luke. No, no . . . impossible! *He* couldn't be there.

They were all laughing, with a sudden roar, at some jest the King had made; and that cracking "Haw, haw!" happened to come first in the uproar. It could not be possible they all heard the joke; but it was quite certain they all laughed.

What a reckless company—what a parade of swaggering finery, sparkling jewels, great periwigs, broad hats, lace and brocade, leathern gloves and the jangle of hanging swords! How they flattered His Merry Majesty crowding round him, laughing at the royal pleasantries! Surely these ranks of "mighty fine" gentlemen knew nothing of what was happening elsewhere.

A decorous cheer was running along where the fashionable groups stood on the grass, at each side of the broad path.

One could not mistake the tall dark man in the middle of the group—the man with head thrown back, straight black brows, masterful voice.

But was that—*that*—the face of the stranger that came in the night?—He had said, "When the whole world is against one, it's something to have a roof and a friend!" The King had said it downstairs at Bush Farm, and it was repeated in the house years after. A

few moments more, and Luke meant to get his chance of reminding him of it. For he was going to fight this out, over there on his knees, if the King would not receive him graciously. He was going to declare at the monarch's feet: "We would have died for you—and I am one of the Furrows. If you did us the honour to rest under our roof, will your Majesty not listen to me *now?*" That was to be the second attack after a first repulse. But surely there would be no refusal. The King's dark face was all good humour. He was enjoying his own jokes.

Not yet!—not yet! A few seconds more.

He was trembling, not with fear, but with the violent anxiety to choose his moment well. No one looked at him. They were all straining to see the King, all cheering, waving hats and kerchiefs. He was so still, his stillness might have betrayed him; but he was nobody—he was nothing.

He could hear what the King was saying now. "So the Duchess was getting her face blacked, and never knew it. Odds-fish! it was as good as a play. The other had soot on her fingers, pretending to pat her face for love. It pleased me mightily to see nobody gave the little vixen away. And the fiddlers doubled up, mighty merry; they could hardly play. Black as a sweep she was! But the Duchess vows she will slap the little rogue's face yet, and in sight of the Court too; so we had best all look out."

"Haw, haw!" from someone at the back again, and the usual noise of men's voices. Oh! how little *he* cared what happened, that laughing man who swore

"Oddsfish!" for an oath! How little any of them cared.

Now or never! Luke Furrow flung away his hat, and strode swiftly forward. He felt the sun-glare; he was in the middle of the path, with all eyes on him. All he cared about, that this was the plan his courage had risen to, and he was going straight on now after one passionate prayer, made in silence, "not to be unworthy of our brethren!"

Close in front of the King he knelt down, and stretched his arms in entreaty. The move was so sudden, everyone stood without a stir. It was plain he was unarmed. All eyes stared at the daring petitioner. What was going to happen?

"Your Majesty," he said, in a clear beseeching tone, "you once did my people the honour to sleep under our roof. We sheltered your Majesty after the mishap at Worcester. Bush Farm in Sussex—the Furrows. You did, indeed, your majesty," he blundered bravely on, "There wasn't one of us that wouldn't have died rather than let you come to harm. And now I want to ask—"

"Oddsfish!" said the King, slightly drawing back, and putting a hand nervously towards his sword-hilt. "What's the matter now? Another lunatic at large!"

Luke was still speaking, shouting from his bended knees, conscious of a rising uproar. His hands were knotted in piteous pleading, stretched towards the man that would not listen. The whole crowd was surging towards him. Someone shouted, "The Plot—The Plot!"

"Haw—haw! I know him. That's Langhorne's

clerk! That's a Papist!" yelled a voice above all the tumult. And Luke knew the voice.

For one moment he saw the face of Rodge—Rodge holding his head up, superbly clad, the hanger-on of some nobleman of His Majesty's escort.

"I am your Majesty's loyal subject," Luke shouted with a desperate strength. "We sheltered your Majesty—Bush Farm—at Burford—down in Sussex. We would have died for Your Majesty—everyone of us! Do but hear me *now*. Oh, sire, you said it was good to have a roof and a friend. It is not for myself I want a favour."

A chorus of "The Plot!—The Plot!"

He was struggling against half a dozen. He went down on the ground. He was crushed. He would be killed! Then he had struggled free, and flung them all off. He was up again, standing all strained and torn before the King, who had drawn back to a little distance.

Again he flung himself on his knees, dragging himself forward. He clasped his hands, and cried out to everyone, looking to one side and the other: "See; I am unarmed. Let me speak!"

"You are a Papist?"

"I am, thank God, a Catholic—as loyal as any of you."

He stared round like an animal at bay. The crowd drew back, leaving a clear space. Then he saw the King standing, and he looked up to the dark face.

"If I am one of your Majesty's Catholic subjects, your Majesty's sense of justice will not deny me a hearing for that."

"A Papist! The Plot." A roar rose from the crowd. "Fling it! Down with 'em. They're not worth judge and jury. Fling it man. It's the Plot."

Luke was pouring out his plea, with that insistent preface, "We sheltered you *then*, and we would have died for you. One favour now—"

A well-aimed stone was flying. It struck the back of his head, and felled him at the King's feet. All Luke knew was that there was one instant's shock and pain, a crack as if the whole world split; and then with a tremendous noise a flood of mist came round him, and he could not hold his senses against the mist and the noise—and there was complete darkness.

.

An obscure sensation of being carried. Shadows came and went. Then darkness again.

Luke Furrow opened his eyes with wonder, having a strange sensation of remembering nothing—not even who he was, and having slept for years. He was surrounded by a white mist. Sometimes the mist cleared.

At last, when the mist opened, he saw whitewashed walls.

"Where am I?"

He had remembered that he was Luke Furrow.

"You are not in the stone jug, my man. This is the guardhouse."

He wanted to ask questions, but the mist came again, and somebody dabbed cold water on his face, and told him to "stop his jaw," and lie quiet.

After what might have been another hundred years, he woke. Something with a taste had been put between his lips. The mist was entirely gone away; but he was

aware of frightful pain—pain that one could not endure and live, and he found it hard to think with such acute headache—such torture.

“Better now, eh?—my man!” The soldier was not unfriendly. He sat on a stool opposite the low pallet; he was in buff leather, hatless. A hat was on the stone floor, and a long steel halberd leant against the wall in the corner. “Don’t pull the bandage, lad. We’ve tied up your head.”

Luke asked huskily. “What was it? What happened?”

“You got your head bashed—that’s all. We’ve had the surgeon in. And he said the ‘fray’ was talked of at Whitehall. His Majesty is mightily satisfied you were not killed. You see, it would have been mighty unpleasant for His Majesty—there right in front of him. People ought to think of that.”

Luke sat up, with a spasm of intolerable agony. “The King! Will you send a message to the King? Will you say what I wanted to say? Oh! for God’s sake—as you hope for mercy!”

“Now, now!” Luke found himself seized and laid down upon the pallet again. “If you won’t lie quiet, young man, I’m going out of this.”

“But if you would only send that word to the King—if he cares anything whether they kill me or not.”

“No one dares send to the King.” The soldier stood up and took his hat and his pipe.

“No, no!—don’t go! Tell me why they wanted to kill me.”

“Well, you see they don’t mean badly—his Maj-

esty's loyal subjicks; but they've most of 'em got a maggot—and it's the Plot."

"There's no Plot."

"But you let it out that you are a Papist."

"I am. What of that? It's no treason."

"They count it treason, my good fellow. It's a bad thing to be a Papist. I'd keep clear of all that, and of the King too, these times."

"So that was it," said Luke softly to himself, and closed his eyes with a contented sigh. "So that was it—thank God!"

He seemed to sleep. "Strange lot! They threw their lives away. Mad lot!" The soldier went over to the corner, and took his halberd, and picked up his hat. He could go now for a breath of air and stretch his legs. The prisoner was asleep.

Luke Furrow had paid for his effort at speech and movement. First came the intolerable pain, then blank unconsciousness.

But when he was Luke Furrow and could see, there was a lantern, and two men knelt near him, and they had been pouring something between his lips, and his face was wet and cold. He could speak. In the agony and the coming darkness, he had shut his eyes and prayed for mercy. But now he could speak. It was as if he had come to life again.

"Could you send to her? . . . Cherry Pie Alley . . . the last house but one . . . round by Shire Lane . . . Temple Bar? My wife . . . she'll be breaking her heart . . . doesn't know *where* I am."

"We can do that," one of the men said to the other. "A boy—when it's day."

"If the boy will go. You know there's—" Here the whisper was lost. "Yes, to-morrow . . . his clerk."

Luke gave him some box-wood beads made from the hedge at Bush Farm and a worn *Agnus Dei*. "You won't make a mockery of these things, if I die?"

"Not I! Don't you talk about dying." The soldier stretched his big buff sleeve to pat Luke's arm. "You'll see her in the morning. Second last house—Cherry Pie Alley—down by Temple Bar."

Luke thanked him with a smile. Then he closed his eyes wearily, and a voice he loved was echoing through his memory: "As if I *could* forget you! . . . What happy news! . . . I am going to the best of Fathers . . . to Him we love on earth and see in Heaven. . . . *In Him was Life.*"

At dawn the prisoner was sleeping without a stir. "He's all right," said the buff-coated soldier, to his comrade in the guardhouse yard. He himself had been dozing in there all night. "I'm glad the poor lad's pulling through. It's rough luck. Oh! yes," with a jolly laugh on his face, "that fellow will be up and about, and knocking us all down yet. What I think is, there was no Plot, and this sort of thing isn't justice. They're paying to swear these fellows' lives away. Here, boy! Where's Ned? Shake yourself up! You've slept enough. I want to send you to London, and don't you go to the hanging. You know Temple Bar? Well, you'll hunt about for Shire Lane, and off Shire Lane is Cherry Alley—no, Cherry Pie Alley.

You'll remember that, won't you? Think of good stuff to gobble so long as you've got the stones out—Cherry Pie. There's the wife of this man that got the knock on the head—second last house. Wot's his name, Bill? Wot did Mr. Rockett say his name was? . . . Ah!—Furrow. Mistress Furrow to come at once. Fetch her with you. And look here, Ned! Come back and listen! Mind you don't go to the hanging. Drink your ale, and take a chunk of bread in your hand, and off with you! And—no Tyburn Corner, or when I catch you again, you'll wish you'd been hanged yourself!"

CHAPTER XX.

THE FOURTEENTH OF JULY.

THE trumpets of Whitehall Palace rang out in morning sunshine. On the grass of St. James's Park lay a veil of mist from which the trees rose as from a white lake. It was going to be a hot day. A tremendous crowd had surged to Tyburn—that awful wilderness where the three-posted gallows stood, and where down by the brook the straw was laid deep and a hideous cauldron was steaming. Pikemen on foot and pikemen on horseback were there. The crowd would want strong handling to-day. All the road was thronged, all the windows and roofs alive—away past St. Giles's-in-the-Fields, and down to the city gate at Newgate market. It was a common and horrible spectacle in times when the highwayman, the pilferer, the forger, the thief of a roll of cloth from an open shop-front, all might swing together, even to the number of twenty. But even in those days of iniquitous waste of life and pitiless barbarity, there was an unusual excitement about every execution for the "Popish Plot." The last great spectacle had been less than a month before, on the twentieth of June, when the five Jesuits, protesting their innocence to the last, had suffered—as living men, cut down alive—the whole of the atrocious sentence. This day's execution was the final scene of the last Plot sensation. The

lawyer of the Jesuits was to follow them. His large practice had given him a great name. The charge of High Treason changed popularity to hatred. The fables of the Plot gave piquancy to his capture. Langhorne a traitor! Away with him! All the mob of the town was out to Tyburn.

Only one glance, as he goes. Mounted pikemen front and rear: sheriff's men, constables and watchmen—a crowd in the middle of a larger moving crowd. The sledge horse—soldiers' horses—a cart with a grim load, oblong and light, covered with black cloth. Pandemonium of noise, a veritable howling of demons. And in the midst—(an eye-witness has left the record of it, and he an enemy)—the prisoner half stretched, half leaning back with a support, jolted behind the horse's heels—the prisoner with no fear whatever, spreading his arms now and again in prayer, and looking up.

It was he that had written, in Newgate Prison:

It is told me I must die.

O Happy News!

Come on, my dearest Soul,

Behold thy Jesus calls thee! He prayed for thee upon His Cross

There he extended His Arms to receive thee;

There He bowed down His Head to kiss thee;

There He cried out with a powerful Voice

Father, receive him—he is Mine!

There He opened His Heart to give thee entrance;

There He gave up His life to purchase life for thee.

.....
Come, sweet Jesus—
Come quickly!
.....

My friends reach out their arms towards me.
O how beautiful are Thy tabernacles!

These must have been the thoughts of the martyr, falsely accused, iniquitously condemned, when he spread his arms and looked heavenward, amid the shouts of the running rabble.

That was the real Richard Langhorne, the holiness of whose soul had never been guessed in the Law Courts. He was braving fierce torment, going straight to His Lord. His vision of death embodies the psalmist's prayer: "Let us go into His presence with exceeding great joy."

He had faced all the revolting cruelties of the sentence; but in his case the final atrocities were commuted—possibly at the active intercession of his wife, for that intrepid woman worked hard to win high influence for her condemned prisoner, faithfully brave from first to last. However pity was obtained, Richard Langhorne was taken down from the noose lifeless, and after the last barbarities and the quartering had been carried out to fulfil the law, his body was given to his friends.

Then the gluttoned crowd began to disperse, and the coaches moved from their place at the rear, with much shouting of lacqueys and pushing back of horses, and swearing at collisions. Many a man had been "staggered" as later broadsheets said, at the dying prayer and protest of innocence and loyalty, both at this final scene and at the more cruel martyrdom of the five Jesuits. Now all was over. The crowd streamed along every road, and drank ale at the taverns, notably

at the ale-house at St. Giles-in-the-Fields, where the execution convoy always stopped, both coming and going.

All over, but Tyburn was noisy still, with brawling and selling of barrows of apples, and yelling of the title of the last broadsheet against Papists and Traytors!

Coaches home! The glass-coach of Mr. Samuel Buckle went gaily rattling along by the more unfrequented roads, towards the house with the fruit garden at Chelsea. During the final move, while coaches were still blocked, he had impulsively offered hospitality to several acquaintances—at Chelsea at twelve. For this was “a broken day” for everybody.

“You needn’t have asked Jervis Buckle,” said the lady in the glass-coach.

“Ah! let bygones be bygones. Isn’t he our kinsman? He ran through the fortune, but now . . .”

“He’s been a highwayman, Samuel—no better than a thief.”

The glass-coach was bowling along through Charing village. That was the statue of King Charles the First—bronze—on horseback. They would drive along through the Park presently, in sight of the Horse Guards’ arch, and the palace walls and the roof of the Banqueting Hall with the row of stone urns along it.

“My dear,” Samuel became emphatic with anger—“I said he was turned respectable—serving King and country. He is watching and reporting—drawing Government pay. He knows Doctor Oates—says Doc-

tor Oates is the nicest man to meet—and so unassuming, though *he* has lodging over there in Whitehall Palace.”

“Oh!” said Henrietta, with an awe that admitted her mistake—“Oh-h-h-h!” with admiring interest. “Getting at the Papists, it is? The dear man! To think our Jervis—our relative—should so repent as to be permitted to share in such godly work!”

“Well, now, my dear, do you see your husband is sometimes *right*?”—with killing sarcasm. “And as for the Baxters—I couldn’t but ask them—with their coach next ours. And Bob Bludyer and his wife—well, of course, they are always welcome at Chelsea.”

The trees were round them now, summer branches overhanging the road.

“Tell that man to gallop the horses, Samuel. That’s seven coming to dinner at twelve. Well, it’s not my fault if the cream and the jellies are not set. I called the kitchen wenches up at two to get the washing out of the way. I’ll stuff the veal directly I’m in. Oh! dear—I wish I hadn’t gone, for I saw nothing. Oh! of course *you* saw—but I couldn’t get out like a man and stand on the coachman’s box. Well, I’ve told Peg to have two quarts of gooseberries in out of the garden, for pies. Ah! here’s the gate now, but it’s a rush for us all. I wish I’d stopped at home. Samuel—there’s a good man—the minute we get in, you won’t mind starting to ‘top and tail’ the gooseberries!”

That boy Ned went in the wrong direction to find Cherry Pie Alley.

Meg had been burning candles down all night,

peeping out at the side of the window curtain, listening for the step that never came. Was Luke gone to Mr. Pepys at the Navy Office—poor Mr. Pepys that was going blind now? Perhaps he would be kind to Luke. Whatever happened, her husband would get to Whitehall Palace, if he missed the King in the Park; she was sure of that. Luke never said he would do a thing, and failed.

Over and over again she passed every bead of the string through her fingers, walking up and down the room—listening—listening.

Perhaps he had to wait to see the King when His Majesty was holding some grand Court in the evening. She imagined Luke penetrating to a broad corridor, and getting leave to wait till the King went by. Or it might be that he was at the door of the Banqueting House, and the King would come, and the dear Queen in to supper, all dressed up with gold and jewels, both of course with their crowns on. Such grand folks might sup very late.

Meg had confided in the good woman downstairs, but long ago the good woman was “abed”; for it was not her husband that was gone to see the King.

When it was morning, and he had not come, Meg could deceive herself no longer. She *was* anxious. Something might have happened—she could not imagine what.

It was the terrible morning. A thousand times her heart had been with the Langhorne. She could not intrude upon their grief for counsel. She would go out—towards the Park, where he had first gone, and after asking at the Park, she could enquire at the

palace gate. But who could tell her anything at Whitehall? Fifty men like Luke might have gone in and out. There was a public road under the gateway arch. So she began her search.

Meanwhile—when the sun has risen high and the morning mist was gone from the grass, Luke Furrow woke, lying on the low cot, his head resting without the least pain on the straw pillow. He had been a long time perfectly still. It was bright day, sunshine coming in a dusty beam through that high-up window—a mere slit with a bar across it.

And there was no Meg. A clock bell slowly struck; he could not count the hour. Trumpets in the distance answered each other.

The soldier had promised to send. She would come yet. His sweet little Meg would come for one last kiss on earth. And he wanted to hold her hands first, and ask her not to fret. He wanted to tell her about Life.

The cell door opened. Two men were there. They were coming in, but they stopped to talk. One said, "a monstrous big crowd. I knew that young rascal would go to the hanging."

Luke shuddered slightly, and heaved a sharp sigh.

"This way—this way!" he heard the man at the door say. "Yes—he's here. Got a nasty knock in a fray in the Park. Oh, no, he's getting better all right. Something was said about his being a Papist, and a stone was flung. That's all!"

He just saw her coming—his Meg—his darling. And she tried to smile courage to him, and he smiled to her—with his bruised face and his bandage close

above the eyes. She was crossing the floor—his darling! But something happened before she reached the couch of straw.

His sight faded, and a roar came in his ears. He strove not to lose consciousness. "Jesu—have mercy! Mary, pray for me!"

Darkness! Then he remembered the tone of a voice saying, "As if I ever could forget you!" Oh! *would* he look down now from the inaccessible Light? Would he say a word for him? For by this deepening unconsciousness, Luke knew he was on the brink of the dark gulf and now he would never come back again.

Dark! Who said dark? Those gaps in the obscurity were not showing the sordid cell. This time the mist was resolving itself into light—vast spaces—multitudes coming to meet him . . . palm-branches . . . Oh! this strange dream!—A palm-branch for *him*?—No surely not. What had he ever done? What had he ever suffered? Only the Lord had kept hold of him—that was what he had prayed for—not to be let fail or fall.

Then with a cry of joy he raised himself, and stretched both hands—"Oh! master—*master!*—let me go with you!"

The crowd was dispersing from Tyburn Corner. And Luke had found Life.

